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**LETTERS FROM THE  
GOLD COAST**





*Portrait by Hay W. Johnson London*

# LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST

BY  
H.H. PRINCESS MARIE LOUISE

"The traveller who returns from a journey may tell  
all he has seen, but he cannot explain all"

*Ashanti Proverb*

WITH 75 ILLUSTRATIONS FROM  
PHOTOGRAPHS, 1 TEXT ILLUSTRATION  
AND A MAP



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## PREFACE

THIS book does not claim for itself any literary merit or distinction. It is a plain narrative of my tour on the Gold Coast, written in a series of letters to my sister during that time. Certain of the historical information as well as some of the details concerning native customs and rites I have since added. This is not mentioned in the text as I wanted to preserve the character of the original letters as closely as possible.

MARIE LOUISE

*May 1926*



## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

A MAP OF THE GOLD COAST, SHOWING THE AUTHOR'S ROUTE  
(From a Drawing by A. E. Taylor)

	FACING PAGE
<i>Front and Back Endpapers</i>	
H. H. PRINCESS MARIE LOUISE <i>Frontispiece</i>	
FREETOWN HARBOUR, SIERRA LEONE	4
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, CHRISTIANBORG CASTLE, ACCRA	10
ON THE WALLS OF G. H.	16
LORRIES LEAVING G. H., ACCRA	16
JOHN MAXWELL (C. C. A.), LADY GUGGISBERG, AND THE GOVERNOR AT THE RESIDENCY, KUMASI, ASHANTI	20
N. T. C. TROOPER, TAMALE, N. T.	24
N. T. C. LINES AT TAMALE	30
MOSQUE AT TAMALE	30
THE MAIL ARRIVING AT TAMALE, N. T.	34
RACE MEETING AT TAMALE, N. T.	34
M. L. ON "TOOTHLESS TOM," TAMALE, N. T.	40
M. L. LAYING THE FOUNDATION-STONE OF THE FIRST EUROPEAN HOSPITAL IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORIES, TAMALE, N. T.	44
BOGGED IN THE NASIA SWAMP, N. T.	50
MY QUARTERS AT NAVARONGO, N. T.	54
"F" LORRY AT ZUARAGU, N. T.	54
M. L. UNVEILING THE FRA-FRA WAR MEMORIAL, ZUARAGU, N. T.	60
MRS. HARRINGTON STUART AND M. L. OUTSIDE OUR QUARTERS AT ZUARAGU, N. T.	64
BOWMEN AT ZUARAGU, N. T.	64
EX-SERVICE MEN AT ZUARAGU	64
FRENCH EX-SERVICE MEN AT NOBILI	70
MAJOR WALKER-LFIGH (C. C. N. T.), M. MICHEL, M. A. HESLING, AND M. POUVEREAU AT NOBILI	70
OUGADOUGOU	74
FRENCH WAR MEMORIAL AT OUGADOUGOU	80
JU-JU-MEN AT OUGADOUGOU	84
HARVEST DANCE, OUGADOUGOU	84
TUG-OF-WAR, TUMU, N. T.	90
"DASH" AT LAWRA, N. T.	90
BOWMEN AT LAWRA, N. T.	94

	PACING PAGE
NATIVE WOMEN AT LAWRA, N T	94
M L, BURIFO, N T	100
VIEW FROM THE REST-HOUSE, BURIFO, N T	100
M L, C EYRE-SMITH AND "TINKER," BURIFO, N T	100
ON THE BANKS OF THE VOLTA, BURIFO, N T	104
WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN THE COMPOUND	110
WOMEN PREPARING FOOD IN THE COMPOUND	110
VIEW OF THE CHIEF OF JIRAPA'S COMPOUND	110
NATIVE WOMEN AT JIRAPA, N T	114
REST-HOUSE AT JIRAPA, N T	114
PALAUER AT WA, N T	120
JU-JU-MEN AT WA	120
MY QUARTERS AT BOLE, N T	124
DECORATING A CHIEF AT THE PALAUER AT BOLE, N T	124
CAPTAIN PUCKRIDGE, GA, N T	130
BANDA NKWANTA, N T	134
BOGGED BETWEEN Banda Nkwanta and Bamboi, N T	140
CROSSING THE VOLTA AT PRANG	144
CROSSING THE VOLTA FROM THE N T INTO ASHANTI AT BAMBOI, N T	150
PALAUER AT SUNYANI, ASHANTI	154
PALAUER AT NKORANZA, ASHANTI	160
PALAUER AT TEKIMAN, ASHANTI	160
THE ROUND HOUSE, EJURA, ASHANTI	164
D G's BUNGALOW, EJURA, ASHANTI	164
PALAUER AT MAMPON ASHANTI	170
BOSOMTWE (THE SACRED LAKE), ASHANTI	174
THE RIVER PRAH, ASHANTI	180
THE PRAH, ASHANTI	180
M L IN HER HAMMOCK AT OBUASI, ASHANTI	180
MANGANESE MINE AT INSUTA, ASHANTI	184
CROSSING THE PRAH	184
RECEPTION AT SEKONDI	190
COURTYARD AT ELMINA CASTLE	194
PALAUER AT ELMINA	200
VIEW FROM CAPE COAST CASTLE	214
M L AND MR FIELDGATE, D C, IN THE COURTYARD AT CAPE COAST CASTLE	214
ANAMABO CASTLE	224
FANTI WOMEN AT CAPE COAST	224

All the Illustrations except the Frontispiece are from photographs  
by the Author

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A GENEALOGICAL TREE OF THE HOUSES OF NA YAKUBA  
*Between pages 56 and 57*

## LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST

R M S "ABA"

April 4, 1925

THORA, MY DEAR,<sup>1</sup>

What a joy to find your lovely flowers awaiting me in my cabin when I came on board ! It made the whole difference, for I must own I had a feeling of bewilderment, the sort of "lost child" sensation as of one starting on a pilgrimage into the vast unknown. I cannot quite get a clear idea of myself out in West Africa, nor what it will be like, however, the bustle and fuss of settling in, last notes and telegrams to be written, kept me fully occupied until the actual moment of sailing.

My cabins are charming, bedroom, bathroom and sitting-room *en suite*. Alice Harrington Stuart<sup>2</sup> has similar accommodation just opposite. Our cabins are on deck, which will be very much cooler in hot weather than if we were below.

The "Aba" is about 8 000 tons and possesses the distinction of being one of the first passenger steamers to be driven by oil, therefore we avoid all the discomforts of coaling and have no smuts or smoke. She is an extremely comfortable ship and her captain, Johnson Hughes, is splendid. It's quite a different voyage from any I have ever made, except Alice and myself.

<sup>1</sup> My sister, Princess Helena Victoria, to whom these letters were written.

<sup>2</sup> My lady-in-waiting.



## 2      LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST

there are no tourists or pleasure trippers on board, every one going back to their job on the Coast, for even Captain Puckridge, who is attached to me and commissioned by the Governor to convey me safely to the Gold Coast, is a District Commissioner in Ashanti and is in reality returning to his work after being home on leave. There are only about a dozen other women besides Alice and myself and Annie<sup>1</sup>

Since I started I have been learning all I can about West Africa and of course the Gold Coast in particular. It is believed that the ancient Greeks, Carthaginians and Phoenicians visited the coast for trading purposes, but there is no really authentic information about these long-ago commercial enterprises. The first European pioneers were the Portuguese as far back as the middle of the fourteenth century, but it was only under Juan de Santerem and Pedro d'Escobar towards the end of the fifteenth century that the famous trade of the "Oro de la Mina" (gold of the mine) was discovered.

About 1480 the first Dutch settlement was founded at Elmina and the original fort built. They started slave-trading almost at once, and it soon proved a very lucrative means of adding to the wealth of the foreign invader.

The English were next on the scene (about seventy years later) and, as may be imagined, were fiercely opposed by the Portuguese. From what I have read I gather that it was only at the end of the sixteenth century that Sir John Hawkins first carried slaves from West Africa. The next settlers were the Dutch, and later Swedes, Danes and Brandenburgers, each in their turn occupying various parts of the Coast, fortified themselves against attack by land or sea by a series of forts, many of which exist to this day, the most famous being Elmina, Cape Coast, Annamaboe, Dixcove, and Christianborg.

<sup>1</sup> Annie Picknett, my maid

## LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST 3

We English when we talk about "the Coast" mean only the Gold Coast, whereas it actually includes Gambia, Sierra Leone and Nigeria. Those living out there, however, are generally spoken of as "Coasters."

Government officials and political officers are bound to remain out eighteen months and then have a compulsory five months' leave. They used to stay one year. This rule was only brought in about five years ago, and there are still a certain number of officials who remain on the twelve months' tour. (I must explain that a term of work on the Coast is always spoken of as "a tour.") As compared with India and other tropical parts of the Empire, eighteen months does not sound a long spell of work, but conditions in West Africa are so unique and different from any others that opinion is very much divided with regard to the wisdom of the eighteen months' tour.

It must be a strange life in West Africa. Lonely beyond description for those who are stationed away in the forest or in the Northern Territories, but in spite of everything—the loneliness, the climate, the absence of other white faces for months and months, the ever-haunting dread of fever—the Coast seems to possess a magical fascination, and I have already fallen under its spell.

### OFF THE IVORY COAST

*April 13*

To-morrow we reach Sekondi and are nearing the end of our voyage. I must go back and try to tell you how we have fared since I began this letter. Las Palmas was a distinct disappointment, we had hoped to get in in the afternoon, but owing to slight engine trouble we did not drop anchor till 9.30 at night, much too late to land. Being very cloudy and dark, it was no use contemplating a dash on shore. We remained in

#### 4      LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST

harbour until 1 a m , and then started rolling our way heavily and slowly down to Cape Verde.

We have now been in the tropics for some days, with glorious weather, hot, hot, deep blue sea and cloudless skies. A curiously lonely run, we have sighted only four ships since we left home waters and those on the distant horizon, one shark, two whales (which I did not see and therefore doubt their existence <sup>1</sup>), one flying-fish and one school of porpoises. This makes up the sum total of all visible life outside our ship.

I have made friends with an enchanting puppy called "Bess," an Irish setter, aged three months. She belongs to Mrs Williams, wife of Major Williams, who is going up to Tamale in the Northern Territories, to take up his appointment as adjutant to the Northern Territories Constabulary. "Bess" is adorable, and she treats her companion, a dignified and aged Pekingese, with no consideration or respect, she reminds me of my "John," except that "John" is a pitch-black Cocker and "Bess" is red. I wonder how "Bess" and the Peke will survive the journey through the tsetse belt and the damp heat of Ashanti. I told Mrs Williams she would have to shave the Peke on account of the heat. I fear he must have heard this remark, for he turned away with a snort and a furious expression on his Chinese face.

The famous diary you asked me to keep remains unwritten because, honestly, there has been nothing of interest to write about. I might have begun at Las Palmas had we landed, but one cannot truthfully describe a place one has seen only from the sea as lines and lines of twinkling lights, mounting up like terraces against a dark background which one believes to be a mountain. The traders were, however, permitted to come on board ship with all their wares, by a special concession of the Captain's. I think he realized that I was disappointed in being done out of our trip on



FREETOWN HARBOR, SIERRA LEONE



shore, and therefore allowed the men to come and sell their goods on board. This he usually strictly forbids, not liking his beautiful clean decks to be "messed up." It was just as if we were rather disconsolate children deprived of our treat and he was trying to make it up to us.

Our next port of call, Sierra Leone, with her beautiful harbour, is lovely beyond description. Try and imagine silvery sands fringed with palms, sloping down to a deep blue sea, broad lagoons with a long line of white foam breaking on the shore, the town creeping right down to the water and, beyond, a glorious background of mountains. We got in later than we had expected, about eleven o'clock in the morning instead of eight, and the heat was intense. Lady Slater, wife of Sir Ransford Slater, the Governor, came off at once to take me on shore. The Governor met me on the landing stage and presented various officials, and the fierce sun beating down upon us made us realize we were back once more in Africa.

Then we motored straight to "The Princess Christian Hospital," Mother's hospital, called after her, and the first on the West African Coast to have white nurses. (You will remember how interested she was in this little outpost in the nursing world, and the work carried on there was always very near her heart.) Christle<sup>1</sup> visited it on his way out to Ashanti in 1895, and I was shown with pride his signature in their visitors' book.

The Bishop of Sierra Leone, Miss Ward, the matron and mainstay of the hospital, and her African staff, received me and showed me over the building, which is charmingly situated looking out to sea, with a wonderful atmosphere of calm and peace, removed from the busy life of the native town. I visited all the patients, including two new mothers with tiny babies.

<sup>1</sup> My eldest brother, the late Prince Christian Victor

## 6      LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST

—one twenty-four hours old and the other <sup>only</sup> six hours. They did not seem to mind visitors, so proud were they of their scraps of brown humanity. Miss Ward has been thirty-five years on the West Coast of Africa, and even after this long term of service her energy is undiminished and she is beloved by Europeans and Africans alike. The work she has achieved is quite beyond praise.

After inspecting the new wing which is being built, and inscribing my name in the visitors' book, we motored up to Government House. It was originally a fort and has now been converted into a most comfortable and delightful residence.

Just before luncheon a rather disconcerting cable was received by the Governor, announcing the fact that, owing to an outbreak of plague and smallpox at Lagos, David's <sup>1</sup> tour in Nigeria was cancelled and he was remaining a week longer on the Gold Coast. This would mean a complete upset of all my plans, but I remained quite undisturbed and maintained that something would turn up. It was for the Gold Coast and my Staff to fuss, and not for me <sup>1</sup>. It would be time enough for me to agitate when Sir Gordon Guggisberg <sup>2</sup> cabled the possibility of my having to camp out on the beach until his other Royal visitor had left the colony.

After luncheon we wandered about the garden, which was a flaming mass of glorious red lilies, tropical flowers, creepers and flamboyant trees. Lady Slater is an enthusiastic and clever gardener and has worked miracles, for every one who knows the tropics realizes how difficult it is not only to start, but to maintain, a garden, you have so much to contend with burning heat which withers everything, tornadoes which wash away everything and if you have weathered these

<sup>1</sup> H R H The Prince of Wales

<sup>2</sup> The Governor of the Gold Coast

two disasters, white ants will destroy what has survived

About Freetown itself, which is a very picturesque little place full of colour and life, I cannot tell you much, for, with the exception of our drive to the hospital, and then up to Government House and back to the harbour, we had, alas ! no time to do anything in the way of sightseeing

I wonder whether you ought not to have a short discourse on the past history of Sierra Leone One of my great joys in travelling and visiting new, and what are to me unknown, countries, is the vast amount of information I gather up in the course of my wanderings I might describe my journeys as history-lessons, learnt under the most delightful and ideal conditions

I mentioned to you in my previous letter that I was studying every book I could find with regard to West Africa, but of course chiefly anything relating to the Gold Coast

Sierra Leone has, however, an equally interesting past I need not refer again to the ancient Greeks or to the fact that Hanno was sent out on a voyage of discovery to West Africa by the Senate of Carthage, because, as I have already told you, we assume it was during this expedition that he visited the Gold Coast

The really interesting period of West African history begins with the expedition of Prince Henry, "The Navigator", it was under his leadership that Pedro da Cintra discovered Sierra Leone in 1462 It is curious that there are practically no traces left of the very extensive Portuguese occupation on the Coast, except just a few words incorporated by the natives into their own language One rather odd bit of information is that a Papal Bull was issued in the middle of the fifteenth century granting a trade monopoly to Portugal and conferring the title of "Lord of Guinea" on King John II.



## 8      LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST

The outstanding events date only from the middle of the sixteenth century. Sir Francis Drake is supposed to have visited the Coast, but it was Sir John Hawkins who appears to have been most active in these parts, and a description of his "troublesome voyage to the Guineas" may be read

The first charter granted to English traders was in 1618 to the "Company of Adventurers of London trading in West Africa", later on, in 1663, Charles II granted another charter to a newly organized company for the development of trade along the Guinea Coast, who called themselves the "Company of the Royal Adventurers into Africa". The King and his successors reserved the right to demand two elephants from the Company "whenever he [the King] or any of them [the Royal Family] should land in the said region between South Barbary and the Cape of Good Hope"

Among the original founders, or what would be equivalent to our present-day directors of the company, were the King's wife, Catherine of Braganza, and his brother, James, Duke of York

Do you, by chance, remember how Pepys in his Diary mentions the founding of this "Royal Company," and also how he refers to a new gold piece coined by the "Guinea Company" from which the coin took its name? It will be great fun to look up all these passages in his Diary when I return home<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>"October 3rd, 1660 This day I heard the Duke (of York) speak of a great design that he and my Lord of Pembroke have, and a great many others, of sending a venture to some parts of Africa to dig for gold ore there. They intend to admit as many as will venture their money, and so make themselves a company £250 is the lowest share for every man. But I do not find that my Lord do much like it"

"May 23rd, 1663 To Whitehall There was walking in the gallery some of the Barbary company, and there we saw a draught of the arms of the company, which the King is of, and so is called the Royal Company—which is, in a field argent and ele-

Later on, the Royal Adventurers met with serious opposition from the Dutch. On demanding reparation for the losses inflicted on our trade, this demand was refused, a man-of-war was then dispatched to the Coast, but was promptly captured by Admiral de Ruyter, who pillaged and burnt our settlements in Sierra Leone<sup>1</sup>.

The Company of Royal Adventures was succeeded by the "Royal African Company of England," whose charter was granted to the Duke of York and Lord Shaftesbury in 1672, and this Company was in its turn succeeded by the "Company of Merchants trading to Africa." These merchants continued up to 1821, when their charter was repealed and their possessions merged in the colony of Sierra Leone.

Even at the risk of appearing like a "West African Companies' Handbook," I must refer to one more Company. This was established by a number of philanthropic Englishmen "for the civilization of Africa," it received its charter in 1791 as the "Sierra Leone Company," the famous William Wilberforce being among the directors, and every servant or member of the Company giving a solemn undertaking not to engage in the Slave Trade.

phant proper, with a canton on which England and France is quartered, supported by two Moors. The crest an anchor, I think it is, and the motto too tedious — 'Regio floret patrocinio commercium, commercioque Regnum'."

"February 13, 1664. To the African House. Anon down to dinner, to a table which Mr. Coventry keeps here, out of his £300 per annum as one of the Assistants to the Royal Company, a very pretty dinner, and a good company, and excellent discourse."

"21st September 1668. This day also came out first the new five pieces in gold, coined by the Guinea Company, and I did get two pieces of Mr. Holder."

<sup>1</sup> "December 22nd, 1664. Thence to the 'Change', and there, among the merchants, I hear fully the news of our being beaten to dirt at Guinea, by De Ruyter with his fleet."

*Pepys's Diary*

But enough of historical facts

We returned on board about three o'clock and were due to sail at 3 30, but owing to some delay in taking in the cargo, we never left until 5 30 and remained trizzling and sizzling in harbour all through the heat of the afternoon with no chance of rest or sleep, as a ship loading is the noisiest abode on the face of the globe but whatever we suffered from the heat and hubbub of those two hours was atoned for by the most wonderful and glorious sunset I have ever witnessed. Imagine a sky of deep blue, merging towards the horizon into every tone of opal and the sun sinking like a ball of flame into the sea, leaving a pathway of molten gold which seemed to melt in the waves. Then in the midst of this splendour a solitary fishing-boat, with a curious little sail like the wing of a bird

We are now off the Gold Coast, and this is my last letter on board. We arrived here early this morning and are lying off Sekondi, but I am not landing because I am due to visit it and its famous harbour of Takoradi when we return to the Coast after our tour is completed.

I am full of grief at leaving my floating home. Every one on board has been so charming and kind, and I have had the most perfect travelling companions in Alice and Captain Puckridge. They have both watched over me and really taken care of me in the most touching manner. I shall miss our regular life on board ship, our walks (eleven times round the deck to the mile), our hours of quiet reading and rest, the endless fun we created out of nothing, the jokes, so important and clever to us, all so impossible to convey to those who have not shared them, in fact, everything that has made up our joint lives during this last fortnight.



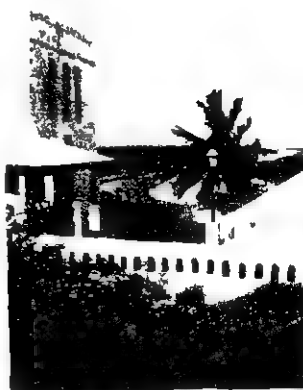
LADY TOLSON



IN ANGLETON



MY ORDEAL



VIEW FROM MY ROOM AT CH

GOVERNMENT HOUSE CHRISTIANBORG CASTLE ACCRA



## LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST 11

GOVERNMENT HOUSE, ACCRA

*April 15*

We have arrived ! But how am I ever to describe the wonder and beauty of our surroundings, the strange old castle built on a rock jutting right out into the sea, with the surf thundering up to one's very windows, the dazzling whiteness of the walls and the vivid brilliance of the flowering trees in full bloom in the courtyard ! I live in a dream of enchantment, and it is almost impossible to know where to begin to tell you of all I have seen and done since the day I landed on the Gold Coast

The first thing I must describe is the actual landing Decima<sup>1</sup> and Captain Doherty, the Governor's A D C, came on board at 7 a.m., and after I had taken leave of all my kind friends and fellow-passengers of the past fortnight I was placed in the famous "Mammy-chair," which is exactly like a chair on a merry-go-round, and is swung over the side of the ship by crane into the surf-boat. The crew of our surf-boat consisted of ten "boys" who paddled and a steersman who stood at the stern of the boat. Please don't be misled by the word "boy" and imagine that it applies only to children or boys in the strict sense of the word—a "boy" in Africa, like a stable "lad" at home, can be any age from sixteen to sixty, and the word is always applied to your servants or employees whatever capacity they may fill. All manual labourers are "boys."

The paddlers sit sideways on the gunwale of the boat with one foot in a leathern loop, and the paddle resembles a Neptune's trident. As soon as we got under way, our crew began to sing, one starting the story and the remainder chanting the chorus. The story is usually about the passengers and how much "dash"

<sup>1</sup> Lady Guggisberg

the crew expects to receive (The word "dash" is derived from the Portuguese "das me" which has degenerated into "dash me" and is the usual expression for giving a present or "tip" "I dash you" means "I give you . . .") The chorus is chanted in a curious rhythm to which they keep time with their paddling We had a splendid surf, in other words a fairly calm sea, just sufficient to run us up on the beach without any difficulty

The Governor met me and at once presented all the officials and ladies who had assembled for my arrival Driving off with the Governor, a wonderful and unforgettable sight met my astonished gaze as we turned into the main street Both sides of the road were lined with an assembly of the most imposing and impressive character I have ever looked upon It was the Chiefs and their followers gathered together in all their barbaric splendour to give me greeting We dismounted from our car and the Governor presented each Chief, the Chiefs in their turn presenting their sub-chiefs and high officials

It requires a far more vivid power of description than I possess to give you an adequate idea of the splendid and dignified appearance of a West African chief His cloth or robe is a wonderful blend of many colours a veritable Joseph's coat ! It consists of a multitude of small pieces of woven material, each piece being about five inches long, by two and a half broad, all of a different pattern and design, sewn together in long strips into one harmonious whole To the uninitiated stranger these cloths may appear to be merely specimens of very clever and beautiful native weaving, but the small squares have a special significance, as the different designs denote the social rank or family, as well as special incidents of interest or importance in the wearer's life One might describe them as a résumé of the family history

The cloth is draped over the left shoulder, leaving the right arm and shoulder bare, and hangs down in heavy folds resembling a Roman toga. When an African, be he chief or otherwise, speaks to one of high or royal rank, he bares his left shoulder, removes his crown or fillet from his head and takes off his sandals. A chief's ornaments, anklets, rings and bracelets, are very beautiful and of pure Ashanti gold, strange and rare in design and of the best native workmanship. The bracelets are sometimes so heavy that the arms of the wearers have to be supported by their pages. Heavy chains of the same precious metal adorn their necks.

Each chief sits under his state umbrella, surrounded by his sub-chiefs, court officials and followers. Some of these umbrellas measure ten feet across, they are usually made of velvet or brocade with heavy fringes of gold and are the most practical institution in this land of sun.

After the ceremony of presentations was concluded, we returned to our cars and motored to Government House.

Accra itself is just an ordinary tropical town, with a picturesque native quarter and, in strong contrast, ugly modern buildings and stores with corrugated-iron roofs and some very fine Government offices. The European residential quarter consists of very charming bungalows and gardens, a mass of flowering trees, the glorious flamboyant cassia frangipani and crotons. Some people try to grow English flowers, but here, as everywhere in the tropics, you have to contend with white ants, the deadly enemy of all vegetable life. All ants wherever found, whether in an English pine wood or in the torrid zone, have, as every one knows, the most complicated and rational systems of government; but the African white ant possesses the distinction of being by far the most destructive of the species.



## 14    LETTERS FROM 'THE GOLD COAST

If you care to take the trouble to procure and study the "Cambridge Natural History," you will be able to learn quite a lot about them, as well as the interesting fact that, more than a century ago, a man named Smeathman, who had travelled much in Africa, read a paper on the subject to the Royal Society. Their nests are more like solid mud buildings than the ordinary "ant heap" we are accustomed to. They are formed of earth firmly cemented together into a rock-like mass running up into a sharp point, rather like the old-fashioned sugar loaf, and are known to reach a height of twenty feet. When I was in the Congo, I frequently came across nests varying from ten to twelve feet in height, and I remember on my way up to Elizabethville (Belgian Congo) passing through what I took to be high banks of red mud, but was told these banks were ant heaps through which the road had been tunnelled by means of blasting, the process of road-making by the ordinary means of pickaxe and shovel being no use.

Even though they are so destructive, the domestic policy of these creatures and their division of labour command one's unbounded admiration and provide a most interesting and instructive study. The community is divided up into sections consisting of (1) soldiers, (2) workers, (3) winged, male and female, some of which shed their wings, and (4) one royal couple. The queen is of an enormous size and has—even among the prolific insect-world—the reputation for producing an incredibly large family. The natives maintain that if the royal couple is destroyed, it will mean the extermination of the entire community over which they ruled.

If you were to cut through a nest, you would be surprised at the order and cleanliness that exists in this strange insect kingdom hidden away from the eyes of man and governed by a code of laws, of which

we have no knowledge or understanding, but which clearly are adequate to the situation. They are very drastic in their method of "tidying up," which consists of eating all the refuse matter, including their cast-off skins and the bodies of their dead comrades. The sick and ailing are also disposed of by this means—a very simple, inexpensive form of medical attendance and burial.

To understand what it means to live in tropical Africa you must realize that the white ant with all its ways is one of the greatest trials you have to submit to. What the Ashanti has to say on the subject is this:

"The white ant that will, when you die, devour your flesh, and when you are alive, eat your clothes."

If the little wretch confined itself to eating only your clothes, your books, your rose-trees and your flowers, you might in time learn to put up with it. But it will devour your house as well. Once these pests—"Termite," or *Termes Bellicosus*, is the official name—invade your dwelling, everything made of wood is doomed. They carry on their deadly work secretly, and often you become aware of what has happened only when your furniture, or the very woodwork used in the actual construction of the house, crumbles away to powder beneath your touch.

But by far the most formidable of all are the big Driver Ants. They will not hesitate to attack man and beast alike. If your bungalow or camp is assaulted by them, your only safety lies in instant flight. I have heard the most terrible tales of what may happen if by ill-luck you cannot escape, or if you interfere with a column on the march, but I will spare you the sickening and gruesome details, and just mention that in olden days a favourite form of torture on the Coast and in Central Africa consisted in pegging

the unfortunate victim down on the ground in the shape of a St Andrew's cross, and then leaving him or her, bound and helpless, in the path of an advancing army of "drivers" In a short while nothing remained but a skeleton They have, however, one redeeming virtue, namely that of scavenger. I hope I am not making your flesh creep too much I assure you that all this information, which kind friends have been giving me, would fill me with alarm but for my unfailing good fortune as a traveller, but all the same I pray I may never meet a "driver" on this tour.

But enough of these gruesome details, and let me return to a more pleasing subject and continue my description of Accra The surrounding country, as regards scenery, is not wildly interesting, it is rather flat undulating land, stretching away to a distant range of low forest-clad hills Christianborg Castle is the old fort built by the Danes during the reign of Christian VII while in occupation of this part of the Coast, the actual date is 1790, and the Royal cipher of C R VII, surmounted by the crown with the date, is still over the gateway It is strange to think that a hundred and thirty-five years later, I, Christian VII's great-great-grand-daughter and the great-great-niece of his wife, Caroline Matilda, sister of George III, should be staying in Christianborg, now the official residence of the English Governor It was rather overwhelming to realize that I was the link with the history of those far-off days

I have promised to present prints of Christian VII and his Queen, Caroline Matilda, to the Castle as a souvenir of the visit of their great-great-grandchild

This castle is really a lovely old building, with high walls and bastions and a courtyard in the centre, in which are widespreading trees, casting a welcome shade, while their crimson blossoms form a vivid con-



ON THE WALLS OF C H



TORRITS LEAVING C H ACCRA



trast to the dazzling whiteness of the surrounding walls. The castle is built on a mass of rock stretching right out into the sea, against which the surf dashes up with a ceaseless and deafening roar.

My rooms are delightful—a huge sitting-room, with comfortable leather-covered arm-chairs, a big sofa, tables, and a large electric fan in the ceiling—this room opening on to a wide veranda overlooking the courtyard, with broad steps leading down to it, and a bedroom, which is the other half of the sitting-room, the partition dividing them having been removed. A sort of inside veranda runs round two sides of the bedroom, and all the windows, of which there are at least a dozen, look down into the sea. Oh! it is so beautiful that I am adoring every minute, but the heat is intense, much greater than I ever experienced in South Africa, or even in British Guiana, because here it is far damper. I have a drying room off my bedroom, a sort of enormous glorified cupboard with shelves all round and masses of hangers and hooks. It reminds me of a larder. All my clothes and belongings are hung up here and are kept dry by electric heaters, otherwise the damp would rot everything, as it is my shoes get covered with mildew. This will give you an idea of what the damp and heat are like.

*Later* I have just returned from a wonderful drive to Achimota with the Governor.

Achimota I ought to describe as the centre round which revolves the whole of his schemes, his plans, his thoughts and his ambitions for the future of the Gold Coast. To describe it merely as a college is inaccurate, it is more in the nature of a university in embryo, and is the first of its kind in West Africa, founded solely for the training and education of the young African in his own country.

The whole question of our past system of education for these alien races is one so open to discussion (and

perhaps criticism) that I should not dare to express an opinion, even if I were in the position to do so. But in the course of my many travels, the doubt has sometimes arisen in my mind whether in olden days the introduction of our European civilization and education has always been conducted on the wisest lines. I will try to explain what I mean.

Western civilization has been achieved by a process of very gradual growth and evolution stretching over a period of nearly 2,000 years, and has produced a form of culture suited to our own requirements, racial, temperamental and climatic. Nevertheless, not even Europe can show one unvaried, stereotyped pattern. The different races have each in their turn modified and adjusted according to their temperaments—temperaments moulded so greatly by climatic and geographical influence.

For instance, take the Latin and the Nordic, both inhabitants of the same Continent and both in constant intercommunication for centuries and centuries. In their earliest and most primitive days, in some form or other, they came under the domination of the highly civilized Roman Empire, therefore one might almost assume that to a certain extent each had the same common basis to start from, but consider, if only for a moment, how dissimilar are the results. And nowhere have these differences expressed themselves more clearly than in their religion, literature, art and music, as well as in their national characters.

We British always consider ourselves a practical and common-sense people, but in spite of realizing and rather priding ourselves on our distinctive national characteristics as opposed to those of other races, we were apt in the far-off days of our early colonization, to introduce our peculiarly British form of civilization, and even education, on primitive lands without sufficiently considering the traditions and beliefs which

had hitherto governed them, or how capable the inhabitants might be of absorbing what was to them a wholly foreign system

We have learnt much since those early days. Those who have the arduous task of administration and government fully realize the importance and vital necessity of training these people step by step and providing them with a practical and technical education as well as the higher branches of learning

Here on the Coast the one great demand of the African is for better education than has hitherto been possible for him. But how to give it to him? On your return to town, if you care to hunt through the bookcase in my sitting-room you will find a small volume entitled "The Keystone," written by Sir Gordon. Please study it, you will find it of absorbing interest. It contains a clear account of what is his great vision of education in West Africa.

No one realizes more than the present Governor of the Gold Coast the seriousness and far-reaching consequences of these vital questions, and Achimota is his great contribution towards the solving of this tremendous problem of how to give the African the best education obtainable, and yet not denationalize him or develop his intellectual faculties apart and away from his native land and people.

Hitherto the young African desirous and keen for higher education has had to seek his training overseas, in surroundings alien to those amongst which he must ultimately live and work, thus exposing himself to the danger of growing out of touch with his own race during the most important period of his intellectual development.

Achimota will provide all the opportunities and facilities for acquiring what would be necessary to him were he studying in England, but with the added advantage that his college and university training is



taking place in his own country instead of four thousand miles away

Apart from higher education, Achimota will in a progressive degree teach trades, industries and professions of all sorts, great stress being laid on technical training. With regard to this, the Governor has already rendered invaluable service to the Colony by starting trade-schools in some of the most important districts of the country. He wishes to convince the African that there is another career for him than that of a Government clerk, and that there is real dignity and no disgrace in manual labour.

All these educational plans would be valueless if you were to lose sight of the great essential—namely, the training and building up of character. The necessity for this is the keystone of the whole of the Governor's scheme, for, to quote his own words, "the greater the learning, the greater the opportunity and the capacity for doing harm, unless knowledge is backed up by character."

His great desire is to run Achimota on the lines of a public school and to imbue the scholars and students with an "esprit de corps" and a due sense of their high responsibilities.

Playing-fields, a gymnasium and swimming-baths are being planned, which when finished would be the envy of many an English schoolboy.

The Principal of this wonderful college is Mr A S Fraser, whom I met years ago in Ceylon, where he was the head of Trinity College at Kandy. He is a man of unique personality, and the Gold Coast is indeed fortunate to have secured his services. He is assisted by a very carefully selected staff of English men and women, most of them holding the highest university degrees, and all making themselves fluent in the various languages in which they have to teach.

The site of the College is magnificent, standing two



JOHN MAXWELL (C.C.A.) LADY CUCCISITTIG AND THE GOVERNOR  
AT THE RESIDENCY KUMASI ASHANTI



hundred feet above the sea-level, about eight miles out from Accra, and covering an area of four square miles. A great feature is a number of avenues of every variety of tree radiating from the main building.

Before we drove out to Achimota, we went to inspect the model of the lay-out and buildings which is going to the Gold Coast Section at the British Empire Exhibition. Do go and see it when you are back in London, you will then be able to understand all about Achimota far better than I can describe it, and do notice whether by any chance there is a case of stuffed birds, if there is, please look for the most delicious little fellows, like very tiny and elegant tits, only blood-red, with a dark velvety head, and others like them, only of a wonderful golden colour, they simply fascinated me on my drive out to Achimota, for there they sat by the dozen, sunning themselves and swinging on the long delicate blades of grass by the wayside.

I longed to stop and watch them, they were so lovely and quite unafraid. I asked what they were, but no one seemed to pay more attention to them than we do to our ordinary London sparrow. I believe some one said, "Are they Rice Birds?" and at that we left it.

\* \* \* \* \*

*April 19*

All our plans are altered—instead of leaving tomorrow for Kumasi as originally intended, we remain here till next Monday. The Governor has influenza, he developed it on the very day I arrived, and though already he is much better, the doctor will not allow him to start on our trek until he is quite convalescent.

To-day is Sunday, I went to church at seven and again at 9.30. The church is not very large and it is quite the hottest and worst ventilated building I have ever been in, the heat during the services being in-

describable. I have been told a very amusing but rather ill-natured bit of gossip as to the reason of its stuffiness. Two churches were designed, one for the tropics and one for the very coldest part of Northern Canada, but by some disastrous mistake the plans got mixed up, with the result that the one specially planned to keep the worshippers warm and to exclude every draught or breath of air has been erected in West Africa, and the tropical church with all the ventilation possible now stands amidst the snows and ice of the Arctic regions. It makes a very good story even if it is not according to fact.

The services were most beautifully rendered, and I was immensely struck by the reverent and devout behaviour of the congregation, almost entirely composed of Africans, except for a few European officials and residents.

Here, as at home, the church is in dire need of money. I was rather surprised and pained to see a red altar-frontal instead of a white one, which is, of course, correct for Eastertide, but I had not to wait long for the explanation of this error in liturgical colour. The Bishop began his sermon by asking for contributions towards a white frontal, explaining that the funds at his disposal were insufficient to provide one. I forthwith settled in my own mind to give it, and I regret to say that I found myself designing it instead of listening to the sermon. I shall arrange for the frontal to be made by the "Disabled Soldiers' Industry"<sup>1</sup>. You know how beautifully they embroider, and it will interest them to work for this church so far overseas.

I have spent a most interesting but rather exhausting

<sup>1</sup> The Disabled Soldiers' Embroidery Industry is a branch of The Society of Friends of the Poor, an organization of which I have been President for over twenty years. We have about a hundred men totally disabled from wounds, all of whom are taught in their own homes.

afternoon inspecting the new native Hospital,<sup>1</sup> which ranks next to Achimota with regard to the future development of the Gold Coast, being destined and planned to provide a complete system of training for the African physicians, surgeons, officers of health, nurses, midwives, dispensers, and sanitary inspectors

The Hospital, which took three years to build, cost over £220,000. I have no hesitation in saying that it is one of the finest, most modern and elaborately equipped hospitals I have ever visited. I wish that many of our patients in England could be nursed under such medically ideal conditions as are the sick African men and women at Accra. The plan on which it is built is that of separate blocks connected by long colonnades. The one for out-patients contains a large dispensary, roomy and well-fitted waiting-rooms, and a small emergency theatre for minor operations. On the first floor are the ophthalmic and X-ray rooms, as well as an extensive dental department, reached by means of an electric lift.

Next comes the Administration block, with its carefully thought-out plan of record offices, lecture rooms and laboratories for the use and instruction of dispensers and sanitary inspectors.

The two large wings, comprising four wards, lie each behind this last block, and are again joined by these long and airy colonnades. A wide, shady veranda has been built at the end of each ward suitable for open-air treatment, and the two operating theatres with all the indispensable sterilizing and anæsthetizing rooms would fill the soul of a London surgeon with green envy.

Of course there is a perfect labyrinth of kitchens, laundries, disinfectant-houses, and store-rooms, medical and domestic, as well as the necessary workshops and

<sup>1</sup> The African Hospital and Achimota College were both designed by W. F. Hedges, Assistant Architect, Public Works Department.

## 24      LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST

engine-rooms      The whole is lit by electric light and it possesses the most perfect water and sanitary arrangements—in fact, it is a model hospital

I must not forget to mention that there is also a thoroughly up-to-date Pathological Laboratory with extensive quarters for the higher officials and their subordinate staff. The hospital has an area of 250 acres, so there is ample space to extend. I understand the next addition will consist of a Maternity block with a residential school for the instruction of midwives, later to be followed by more residential quarters, lecture-rooms and laboratories for medical students.

I was received at the entrance by Dr. O'Brien and his staff, Miss Furley, Senior Sister-in-Charge, and her second-in-command. Miss Furley is the sister of a former Colonial Secretary on the Coast, and is not only very charming, but a most able matron and administrator.

Even at the risk of appearing to criticize or offer an opinion on matters which do not really concern me, I cannot help saying that I should be glad to see some changes brought about in the West African Nursing Service. I cannot think it right or practical from economic, health, or purely humanitarian reasons, that these white nursing sisters should have to bind themselves to an eighteen-months' tour on the Coast, as the Civil Servant or Political Officer is compelled to do. But so it is. Owing to the enormous tax imposed on their physical strength by nursing in this trying climate, the nurses often break down and have to apply for sick leave, before their tour is completed, thus throwing a double burden of work on the remaining staff.

I must tell you that, as in the Civil and Political Service, all members of the West African Nursing Service are granted three weeks' local leave during their eighteen months' tour. But this short holiday is really of very little practical use, there is no "hill-



N T C FOOTER JAMALI N T





station" for them where they might get a change of air, and three weeks does not give sufficient time for a sea-trip to the Islands,<sup>1</sup> in fact there is literally nowhere for them to go

In addition to their own professional duties, the whole responsibility of the teaching and training of the African nurses rests on these sisters

My position as Chairman of the Nursing Committee at University College Hospital has given me a very clear insight into the life and needs of a nurse, and therefore I know from personal knowledge how great are the demands made on the physical strength of a nurse, even where you have not the question of a tropical climate to consider

I am filled with admiration at what our English nurses accomplish out here, their devotion to the sick and their high sense of duty are beyond praise

No one realizes so well as you do my love of organizing, and nothing would rejoice my heart more than the task of remodelling the West African Nursing Service. I should begin by giving the Senior Sister-in-Charge the official title and status of Matron and then insist on a correct uniform with distinctive badges of rank. At present the sisters and nurses all wear the same dress, a very neat and smart white overall, most practical from the washing point of view, but there is nothing on their uniforms to distinguish the Sister, who is in reality the Matron, from the latest joined nurse out from England

Then there would be the question of more adequate salaries, the due correlation of these with their pensions and the question of how their length of service on the Coast stands in relation to their previous services overseas. What I should advise is the abolition of the eighteen-months' tour. No white woman ought to be expected to work at such high pressure and at

<sup>1</sup> Canary Islands

## 26    LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST

such an exacting profession for eighteen months on end in this climate

You may think that I have written rather too strongly on this subject, but I have had both the opportunity and advantage of discussing the matter with the medical authorities, and consequently do not hesitate to express my views as I have done

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*April 25*

There has been so much to do and see during the past week that I have had no time to write to you since last Sunday. The mail for home leaves to-day, and from my windows I can see the "Aba" surrounded by a whole fleet of surf-boats, busy taking in her cargo. She arrived early this morning from Lagos and leaves to-night for Sekondi.

It is impossible to realize that I have been here only twelve days, for I have become so absorbed in the many and varied subjects affecting the welfare of this wonderful Colony that I feel as if I had been living on the Coast for years.

Needless to say, I have been visiting and inspecting all the schools and many of the other Government buildings, I will not weary you with a detailed lecture on each one, but try and give you just a brief outline of the events of different days.

Last Monday we motored out to the Government Sisal Plantation. I do not suppose that you have very much knowledge of, or interest in, sisal, nor had I, till I came here and saw this huge experimental plantation of 1,000 acres. The Germans cultivated this particular plant very extensively in Togoland, and two of their big plantations came under our administration during and after the War. We soon proved for ourselves that sisal was of enormous value from the commercial point of view, so Government

is now trying to develop this new industry in the hope that it will prove to some extent an alternative source of revenue should the cocoa crop show signs of failing

There is a further advantage, namely, that sisal can be grown on what has hitherto been very unproductive and poor land on the plains of Accra. I can best describe sisal as first cousin in appearance to the aloe. Its leaves are known to reach a height of five feet, and, like its cousin the aloe and the New Zealand flax, at the end of the fourth or fifth year of its growth it produces a long pole-like stem. So much for its looks. This apparently uninteresting plant, which seems to thrive and flourish best wherever the soil is poorest, produces the article known as hemp from which ropes, big and small, are made.

When once this is a thorough-going concern and the plantation has repaid the initial outlay, Government, I believe, will hand it over to the chiefs, providing, of course, that the African has proved himself qualified to carry it on. If this plantation succeeds, which it has every appearance of doing, others of the same kind will be started.

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Amongst my many tours of inspection I visited not only the very important Government Schools for boys and girls, but also the most excellent Technical School. It was started some years ago in order to give carpenters and metal-workers a sound, practical training. It has now developed into an important residential school run on the Boy Scout principles, with a resident house-master.

I am glad to say that great attention is being paid to the physical training of the pupils in the different schools, and I have been most agreeably surprised to see how admirably they carry out their drill and exercises.

Since this particular Technical School was opened, other and more advanced technical trades and crafts are being taught, necessitating a certain amount of theoretical training. As the trade schools are started and developed throughout the country, this Technical School will become the finishing centre for all handicrafts, and will in time, it is hoped, produce skilled craftsmen and mechanics, as well as thoroughly qualified instructors for the various local trade schools.

I spent a long time in the carpenters' shop and was immensely delighted with all I saw—the whole idea is so essentially practical and full of common-sense—and I was full of admiration and interest for the really splendid furniture they were turning out. I have left a number of orders with them. Amongst other crafts, they do most excellent bookbinding. The Governor has had a very beautiful visitors' book prepared for me which the boys have bound in that attractive red native leather.

From there we went on to inspect the Government Printing Office, all very interesting, but as it was by now almost midday and very, very hot, I was grateful when the suggestion was made to return home.

Police Barracks, Waterworks, and Post Office—all these I have visited at length, and I am rather amused by the surprise—sometimes even despair—of those who accompany me, at the thoroughness of my inspections in spite of the heat.

We have been having mild tornadoes most days, but up to now they have been very considerate as regards the hour of their arrival and have never seriously interfered with any of our plans. Except on Friday! The Governor had to make a very important speech that morning at the Legislative Council, to submit a proposal to raise a loan of four million pounds for the country. The proceedings were to be conducted with full pomp and state, with escort and guard of honour,

and as he thought it would interest me, he asked me to be present. Decima, Alice and I were to leave the Castle at 9.30, well in advance of him, so as not to clash with his official arrival. The tornado broke just as we were sitting down to breakfast, and the rain came down in such deluges that it was out of the question for the ladies to move from the house.

Escort, guard of honour, everything, in fact, had to be put off, and the proceedings were shorn of all their splendour. I was much disappointed.

Of course the storm stopped just as H. E. returned to the Castle—too provoking!

In the afternoon we went out to the European Hospital, a very modest and unpretentious-looking building. There is nothing much to describe, as it is just an ordinary large bungalow with a broad airy veranda, on to which the wards (or, strictly speaking, rooms) open. Dr. Le Fanu, the Chief Medical Officer, met me and took me over it. I then sat for some time talking to the patients, amongst whom was a Mr. Atterbury, the Provincial Commissioner at Cape Coast.

The Senior Sister and her small staff of nurses are doing wonderfully good work, the more I see of these European nurses the greater is my admiration for them and all they are doing under peculiarly difficult and trying conditions.

After all these lengthy descriptions of schools and hospitals, including my lecture on the future education and development of the African, you will be relieved to hear that, between whiles, I have been extremely gay, not to say frivolous. I have met with the most extraordinary kindness and hospitality on all sides since my arrival on the Coast and everybody seems to vie with one another in doing what they can to make my stay in Accra a happy one.

Of an evening we sit on the bastion looking out to sea and watch the stars shining like myriads of fairy

30    LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST

lamps in the sky    We talk of home and England and  
try to realize that this is West Africa

KUMASI, ASHANTI

*April 27*

It has just struck 6 (a m)    I have been up and dressed since 5    My modest amount of baggage has been taken downstairs, and from my window I can see the long line of lorries all loaded up and preparing to start

Quite late last night I heard that there was just a chance that letters might catch an intermediate mail home if posted to-day, and as there is a whole long hour to wait for breakfast I cannot do better than spend it in writing to you    The last morning at Accra was very busy, every moment being taken up with sorting and packing our things    our luggage or loads had ~~all~~ to be ready by three o'clock in the afternoon    My baggage consists of a camp bed, a tin bath (in which all the "last things" are packed), table, chair, three small tin boxes containing my clothes, a dressing-case, and the small brown bag with its precious contents of cigarettes, face lotion, clean handkerchiefs, and soap. Alice and I spent most of the last morning sticking labels on to all our loads    We shall each have a lorry to convey our belongings—each lorry is lettered and all our baggage must have the corresponding letter    I am "F" and Alice is "I"    In case the roads prove to be impassable and our motor transport breaks down, everything will have to be carried, so all has to be portioned out into 60 lb head loads    As you can imagine, the heat and the gum combined rendered our labours extraordinarily sticky—everything stuck excepting the labels, but eventually our work was accomplished, and an army of prisoners with a warder in attendance appeared to carry our baggage down to the lorries.



NTC LINES AT TAMALE



MOSQUE AT TAMALE





The courtyard presented a strange appearance—piles of luggage and stores of all sorts and descriptions, wherever one stepped one tripped up over a tin box or a bath, but by four o'clock all the lornes were loaded up and on their way to the station.

With their departure peace and quiet descended once more on the Castle and its occupants, Alice and I went across to Commander Whitfield's quarters to have tea with him on his little balcony overlooking the sea, he has, alas, just resigned his appointment as A D C to the Governor, owing to ill-health, and is returning home by the next mail, Captain Doherty has replaced him on the Staff. Then a farewell walk round the garden, a final "look round" our rooms to see that nothing had been left behind, and shortly before seven we motored down to the station. Here a large number of officials and friends had assembled to bid us farewell and "good luck," and accompanied by all their good wishes we climbed into the train and started on the first stage of this marvellous tour.

I believe I have quite forgotten to mention the names of our party on the trek. There are—

The Governor and Decima,

Alice and myself,

Commander Hemans, Private Secretary,

Captain Doherty, A D C,

Captain Puckridge (who, I am glad to say, the Governor has now attached to me for the whole of this tour),

Dr Le Fanu, brother of the one I met at the European Hospital at Accra, and

Captain Doole, Transport Officer

We shall gather up successive Provincial and District Commissioners in our party as we pass through their respective districts, so with all our "boys," orderlies, cooks and motor-drivers, not to omit that important person the washerman, we shall be a large party.

My "boy" Malam is excellent, he calls me "Sah" to my face, but talks of me as "the big Missis", Alice is "the small Missis," and Annie "small, small Missis," or, "big Missis's mammy" He is fearfully upset in his mind over my bath essences, and he came to Annie to ask why "Big Missis" turned bath-water green and why his hands smelt This means that my "Omy" tinges the water, and when he cleans the bath his hands smell of all kinds of delicious and unknown scents

I had also a little African maid, named Jessie, really very pretty, but a little minx She was to have gone with me, but I decided not to take her as she would have been too much of a responsibility

The night journey to Kumasi was wonderfully comfortable, my coach was the last one on the train It consisted of a huge saloon furnished with three big arm-chairs, a table, a sort of cupboard and side-table combined, which served as my dressing-table, and my own camp-bed

Captain Puckridge had spent most of the afternoon in superintending the stowing away of my loads and making all the preparations for my comfort, with the result that when I got into my coach I found not only my camp-bed put up and my bath ready, but everything I needed for the night unpacked and laid out just as if I had been in my own room at home I had quite a spacious bathroom next to my saloon adjoining it a small kitchen and pantry and a sleeping place for my "boy"—in fact nothing could have been more comfortable or convenient Alice and Annie had each their own coach just beyond mine

About three stations out of Accra our train stopped for an hour to enable us to have our dinner in peace and quiet

We did not sit up very long after dinner, as we were all tired and anxious to get to bed I woke very early,

and went out on to the little platform at the end of my coach and there I sat watching the dawn break over the forest.

How can my poor pen ever do justice to the indescribable beauty of that dawn, or give you even the faintest idea of the strange mixture of memories and emotions that crowded in upon me

Consider my feelings

It was just thirty years ago that Christle was passing through this same scene, gazing, as I am, on this strange, mysterious forest, but, oh, how utterly different our two journeys! He came on duty as a soldier and one of an armed force penetrating into a hostile land, for there was then war between England and Ashanti, I, his sister, come to the same country thirty years later, welcomed as an honoured guest with every token of loyalty and friendship by the chiefs and their people. He wearily, and often sick with fever, marched on foot from Cape Coast, cutting his way through the impenetrable depths of the Ashanti forest, held up almost at every step by a tangle of century-old undergrowth. I also travel through the forest, but in a saloon carriage attached to the Governor's train, in perfect comfort. My journey of 192 miles from Accra takes twelve hours, Christle could make only forced marches of six miles a day, and it was twenty days before he reached Kumasi.

\* \* \* \* \*

We were due to arrive at Kumasi at seven, but owing to a breakdown on the line had to wait for over an hour at Juaso. Here Alice wandered into my coach, to share our early morning tea. We were both rather silent, not because there was nothing to talk about, but because, the spell of the forest being upon us, there was too much.

\* \* \* \* \*

My first impression of Kumasi was a strange one

We passed by the great market, full of busy native life, on the upper road I could already distinguish in the distance the outline of many state umbrellas and a vast crowd of people. All along the line and perched on the top of each small tree sat masses of hideous bare-necked vultures, flapping their huge wings and uttering hoarse cries as they flopped down on to the ground to carry on their useful but revolting work of scavenging.

I lay *perdue* in my coach until the Governor had inspected the Guard of Honour and received all the officials and residents. He then came to the door of my saloon and presented the Chief Commissioner of Ashanti, John Maxwell, who is one of the most respected and beloved officials in Ashanti, and is affectionately named "the Laird" by all who know and work with him. We made firm friends then and there, and in a few minutes I felt as if I had known "the Laird" for years.

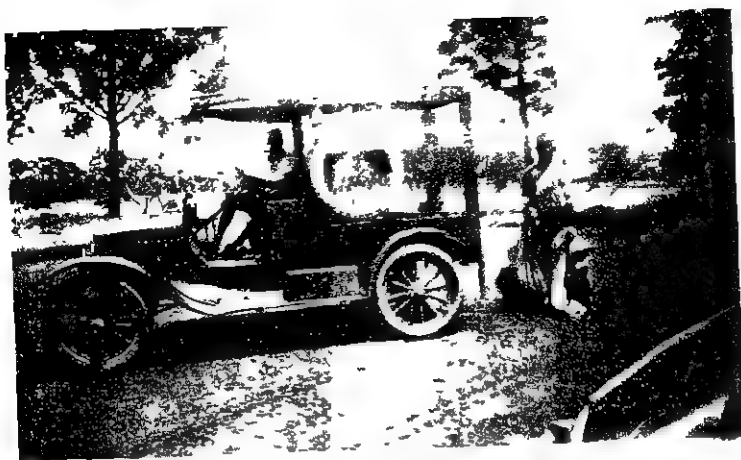
The Governor, who had to greet the chiefs, then left us, and John Maxwell forthwith took charge of me and presented all the officials, military and civil, as well as the residents and heads of Missions.

After talking to them for a little while, we inspected a splendid troupe of Boy Scouts, and then I drove off with the Chief Commissioner to receive the chiefs' welcome. Thora, my dear, the first person to greet me was Prempeh<sup>1</sup>. I cannot help wondering whether his thoughts, like mine, skipped back over the intervening thirty years.

The Seriki of the Zongo<sup>2</sup> presented me with a wonderful necklace of large oblong ivory beads, the centre ones decorated with gold bands beautifully engraved,

<sup>1</sup> The ex-King Prempeh was deposed at Kumasi in January 1895, during the campaign in which H. H. Prince Christian Victor took part.

<sup>2</sup> The Head of the Mohammedan community.



THE VIL VECTON



RACE MEETING AT TAMALLANT



the necklace being of course of native workmanship

After all the presentations and greetings were over, we drove up on to the ridge, where a very charming Residency has been built. You can imagine the thousand questions with which I bombarded poor John Maxwell during that drive. I was trying to reconstruct in my imagination Kumasi as Christle had known it. Just as we passed the post office Mr Maxwell told me that we were driving over the actual spot of the old sacrificial grove, do you remember Christle's description of what that gruesome place was like when he entered the town and had to pass through it?

The Residency is, as I have already said, charming, a most comfortable house, and it stands well in fine open grounds. I was delighted to find quite an ambitious garden with flower-beds and beautiful roses. The whole place is newly laid out, but when the trees have grown up it will be really lovely.

After a much needed and most excellent breakfast, we disappeared to our various rooms and began unpacking and repacking, Annie giving Malam minute instructions about all my clothes and where and how to pack them. This occupied most of the morning until lunch.

About four o'clock I went out for a drive with John Maxwell. First we drove to Cadbury Hall, a training-college for agricultural students, built by the Government through the generosity of Messrs Cadbury Brothers. About six years ago this firm presented to the Government a sum of £5,000 to prove in a practical form their appreciation of the energetic manner in which cocoa has been developed on the Gold Coast.

No special conditions as to how the money was to be spent were attached to this splendid gift, but the donors intimated that they were anxious it should be



## 36    LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST

devoted to some scheme connected with tropical agriculture and much needed research work. After some unavoidable delay the College was built, containing a very fine lecture-hall, recreation and study room, and an excellent laboratory. There is ample room for extension, and it is proposed to move the whole of the research branch of the Agricultural Department at Aburi, near Accra, to Cadbury Hall.

I do not think you can fully understand the importance of Cadbury Hall and all it intends to accomplish in the way of agricultural education unless I tell you that the Gold Coast produces all but half of the world's entire supply of cocoa. This is almost unbelievable if you consider that cocoa was introduced into this colony only about forty-five years ago. It was in 1879 that a native labourer returning from Fernando Po brought some seeds back to the Coast and planted them somewhere in the Mampon district.

Twenty-five years ago less than five hundred tons were being carried by the railways, and now in 1925 the amount has risen to close on two hundred thousand<sup>1</sup>.

All the cocoa plantations are owned and cultivated by the chiefs and local farmers, the European trader merely buying the crop. This is quite a different system from that in the West Indies, where the plantations are the property of the European planters.

Hitherto one of the great difficulties on the Coast has been to impress upon the native the vital importance of keeping the land clean under the cocoa trees, and of destroying the old pods instead of allowing them to lie and rot on the ground, for decaying vegetation is the bitterest enemy to the young delicate pods,

<sup>1</sup> These figures only represent the cocoa tonnage carried by *rail*, not the total export from the Gold Coast Colony. In 1917-1921, 591,000 tons were exported, I have not the correct figures for the years 1922-1925.

besides, it breeds every description of insect pest. The Government Agricultural Department is doing admirable work in teaching the farmers how to cultivate and tend the trees on more practical as well as on more scientific lines, and is also instructing them in the varied and many cocoa diseases, their prevention and cure. From now on, the centre for all this training will be Cadbury Hall.

I spent a long time examining endless specimens of cocoa pests as well as a collection of most repulsive-looking bugs and beetles in bottles, after having quite an interesting little lecture on tropical agriculture, and being laden with many beautiful flowers (including sprays of absurdly large gardenias), we continued our drive.

Our next visit was to the Wesleyan College, a large and imposing building. I received an enthusiastic welcome from Staff and students alike, and having carefully inspected all the classrooms, dormitories and the kitchen, we took leave and hurried on to the European Hospital.

It was too late and too dark to pay more than a very fleeting call. However, I promised the Matron and her patients a long visit on my return to Kumasi in a month's time.

The Officers' Mess was our last engagement before motoring home. Here I was received by Colonel Macdonell, who showed me over the Mess, and I was thrilled at all the relics and trophies of the regiment's<sup>1</sup> past history. They possess a wonderful collection of pictures and photographs of all the officers who have played an important part in the military history of Ashanti and Kumasi in particular. I have promised to send the Colonel a picture of Christie, as he is most anxious that the Mess should possess one.

Do you remember that quaint little photograph of

<sup>1</sup> Gold Coast Regiment

## 38    LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST

Christle and Sir Francis Scott? It always hung in Mother's room at Cumberland Lodge<sup>1</sup>. They are both seated on "chop-boxes" under the British Flag in front of the Fort at Kumasi. I don't know who took it, but it was done just after the flag was hoisted on January 18, 1895. It would be rather splendid if you would agree to our presenting that historical little picture to the Regimental Mess. I know it would be enormously valued.

One of their most treasured relics is the famous message sent by the besieged fort at Kumasi during the rebellion in 1900. The message runs as follows. "Governor broke out seventeen days ago. Garrison rapidly diminishing by disease. Can only last out a few more days on very reduced rations. Help us."

Two duplicate messages were written, both on cigarette papers and entrusted to two soldiers of the poor starving garrison, only one got through alive. I am not going to attempt to tell you in this letter a thing about the Siege of Kumasi, for the account of it would fill a whole volume, and I am already writing against time.

On our return to the Residency we found the Governor entertaining a large tennis-party. It was already so dark we could scarcely distinguish one another, but it was *delicious sitting out in the cool dusk*.

I am being repeatedly summoned to breakfast, therefore, good-bye. Goodness knows what hair-raising adventures I may have to tell you next time I write.

TAMALE,

*May 2*

We have arrived in the Northern Territories, but, oh, such an upset of plans! H E is ill again. We

<sup>1</sup> Cumberland Lodge, Windsor Park, was our old home.

\*were greeted with this disappointing news this morning when we assembled for breakfast. The Doctor is rather worried about him and has advised some days' complete rest, perhaps the fatigue of driving the heavy Lanchester for so many hours on end in such intense heat was not wise, considering that he was only just convalescent from influenza. He showed signs of strain already at Palbe and was in considerable pain, which made me rather anxious, I promptly offered every kind of remedy (you know I never move without an emergency chemist's shop in my bag), all of which were gratefully accepted, but I fear did little good. However, H E gallantly continued the journey to Tamale, but now he has been obliged to give in.

Also news came in that the road between Gambaga and Bawku has been washed away in a recent tornado, this and H E's illness necessitate a complete alteration in our plans. I am sorry to miss Bawku, as it is an extremely interesting frontier town with a remarkable and far-famed market, but when on trek in West Africa, especially in the tornado season, one must be prepared for any eventuality and dislocation of one's arrangements.

I must now go back and tell you of our first two days' trek from Kumasi to Tamale. The first day's run was 145 miles straight through to Yeji, where we spent the night. We left Kumasi at eight o'clock in the morning, having taken a very sad farewell of Annie,<sup>1</sup> who has returned to Accra to await my return to the Coast in seven weeks' time. We were indeed a formidable procession: six motors, consisting of the Governor's Lanchester, a Crossley, a Buick, a Standard and two Trojans (noisy but useful cars which go by the names of "Tweedledum" and "Tweedledee"), and sixteen lorries.

Our road lay through typical Ashanti forest: giant

<sup>1</sup> My maid

trees, varying from one hundred and fifty to two hundred feet high, with creepers hanging like thick curtains from their topmost branches, dense undergrowth with vivid splashes of colour from the poinsettias, these latter a beautiful deep crimson. It is a peculiarity of these flowers that in all the other parts of the Gold Coast they are invariably white or a very pale pink, but only here, in the forest of Ashanti, are they this wonderful crimson. The native name for them is "the red blood of Ashanti." Otherwise miles and miles of this immense, impenetrable jungle all enveloped in a dim subdued light. You felt that you were passing through the nave of a vast cathedral.

We went through various villages, our arrival usually being heralded by gunmen firing wild salutes into the air, crowds of eager expectant villagers all smiling and friendly, waiting to greet the Governor and his guest. On arriving in the centre of the village we left our cars, to greet the chiefs and to hold the Palaver.

The expression "palaver" is an adaptation of the Portuguese "palavra," meaning "word" or "speech," and was commonly used by the Portuguese traders of olden times to describe their bargaining with the native. The English traders in their turn took it up as a common expression, and now it is invariably used in West and Central Africa to describe a conference or solemn talk among native and foreigner alike. It strikes me as an excellent expression, and its adoption is another instance of our readiness to take words where we find them and make them our own.

The chiefs are invariably assembled in a semicircle or in the form of a horseshoe, with the head chief sitting on a stool under an umbrella of state and surrounded by his sub-chiefs, chief officials, heralds and linguists. The children of the sub-chiefs, or aristocracy, act as pages, crouching on the ground and waving large feather fans.



M L ON TOOTHLESS TOM JAMAL N I



The heralds or criers wear caps, made out of monkey skins, with flat gold tops on their heads, the linguists hold gold rods of office, adorned with curious emblems, which they carry horizontally, the executioner, whose occupation, I am glad to say, is now a sinecure, carries a sword with an enormously broad blade, wears a tight-fitting cap of leopard-skin and is hung with cruel-looking skewer-shaped knives, called sepow knives, with which he once used to pierce the cheeks and tongue of the victim about to be executed to prevent him crying out, or, according to Captain R S Rattray, "cursing the king"

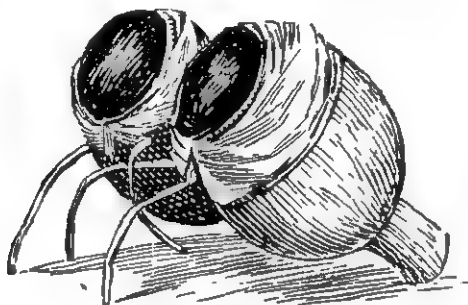
You will remember Captain Rattray, who was deputed by Sir Gordon Guggisberg to explain to us the drum language at Wembley last year? Most of my information about this country and its traditions comes from Captain Rattray's very interesting book on Ashanti, which I was reading for two or three months before I sailed. It was a great pleasure to meet him again the other day in his bungalow at Mampon, on the way to Ejura. He has mastered not only the history of this race, but in a second book, which is an inexhaustible mine of sagacity, beauty, and curious lore, he has collected all the most remarkable Ashanti proverbs. Never was the description of the proverb as "the wisdom of many and the wit of one" better illustrated than in the sayings of this primitive folk.

As I have said, Captain Rattray's knowledge of Ashanti is profound, and I am now going to borrow some of it in describing the talking-drums, which are such an outstanding feature of all palavers. These are supported on a curious forked stand, giving them the appearance of large beetles. They are always in pairs, male and female, and are drummed in a peculiar manner, quite different from the ordinary tom-tom, each beat meaning a word, the drumming relating to the greatness or dignity or noble deeds of the chief.



According to Captain Rattray, " Tympanophony, or drum-talking, is an attempt to imitate by means of two drums (a ' male ' and a ' female ') set in different keys the exact sound or words of the human voice. Such an idea does not appear nearly so far-fetched to the native mind as it might to a European, accustomed as the former is to ascribe even the sounds made by birds and animals to attempts at human speech.

" The drummers are trained from childhood, and must not only be experts in drumming, but also have learned the traditions and genealogies of all the kings, and the folk-lore of the tribe as contained in the pro-



TALKING DRUMS

verbs, for it would seem that most of the sentences drummed come under these two headings.

" The classes of messages sent come under several heads.

" 1 The names and deeds of each king or chief who has occupied the tribal stool as far back as tradition has any memory of. Drumming thus serves as an important way of perpetuating the tribal memory.

" 2 Messages addressed to the various materials from which the drums are made, the particular tree from which cut, the elephant from whose ear the tense membrane is made, the creeper used to tie down the skin. An appeal is also always made to a mythical divine drummer for permission to drum.

" 3. Among the commonest proverbs drummed are those in which a Supreme Being figures proving that the native name and conception of a High God is not derived from the Europeans.

" 4 Alarms, especially fire

" 5 War messages, generally insulting, and not, as one might suppose, messages giving instructions as to movements of troops or orders to war captains . . . Any such orders would have to be delivered secretly, and not 'shouted out' for the enemy to hear

" The words and sentences are rapped out on two drums placed side by side The drummer squats beside them with a drumstick in each hand The tones of the drums are pitched in different keys The message is rapped out with extraordinary rapidity and skill, the endeavour being to imitate the intonation usually given to the particular sentence to be drummed, each syllable of a word being represented by a beat on one or the other or both of the drums "

But to continue my account of the Palaver—it is the custom in Ashanti for the stranger to offer the first greeting Therefore, with an enormous umbrella of state carried over my head, I advance with the Governor to pay our formal call We start from left to right, the chief rises from his stool, removes his crown or head-dress, uncovers his left shoulder and takes off his sandals He addresses us through his linguist and we answer through an interpreter I have described to you the manner in which the chiefs drape themselves, leaving the right shoulder and arm bare, but I cannot convey to you how beautiful is the dignified action with which they perform this

On the conclusion of the ceremonial visit we took up our positions on a small improvised dais and sat on chairs covered with wonderfully rich silken cloths, and then the chiefs, each in turn of seniority, came to pay their ceremonial visits. The real business of a

## 44    LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST

palaver begins with the Governor speaking through an interpreter to the chiefs. He thanks them for their greeting, expresses his pleasure at seeing them, outlines his policy and refers to the local affairs of the district, ending his speech by asking whether the chief or chiefs have anything they wish to say. If the chief wants to bring forward any request or complaint, he rises from his stool, standing in the centre of the semi-circle and relates his story through his linguist. When all is over gifts are brought and spread out at your feet. These are very varied. In one village I received sheep and fowls, and three hundred eggs. (The latter had been collected for several weeks in anticipation of my visit!)

I must tell you of a somewhat embarrassing though comic situation that has arisen owing to my arriving on the Gold Coast within twenty-four hours of David's departure. I am universally taken to be his wife, already at Accra it was the subject of much gossip in the market why we did not arrive together, and still more, why I have allowed him to continue his journey without me.

At our Palaver at Attabubu my "dash" was accompanied by the following letter to the District Commissioner from the Serike of the Zongo<sup>1</sup>:

"SIR,

I have the honour most respectfully to pass through you to Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales the following presents

100 eggs 10 fowl and 2 sheep

MALAM HALIDER

X his mark

Serike Zongo"

Palavers were held at all the villages we passed through, the same ceremonial being observed at each

<sup>1</sup> Head of the Mohammedan community



VI L LAYING THE FOUNDATION STONE OF THE FIRST JUKOILAN HO THUM IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORIES TAYALL N 7



On reaching the boundary of the Mampon district we were met by Captain Norris (Deputy-Provincial Commissioner). He was one of my fellow-passengers on board the "Aba," and I was delighted to meet him again.

Although I have given you the most elaborate and detailed descriptions of a Palaver, I find I have never mentioned one of the most important, I might almost say *the* most important, person present, namely, the Queen-Mother—a dreadful omission, and I must at once begin to explain all about her.

To give you even a faint idea of the importance and status of a Queen-Mother, and why women as a whole occupy such a unique position in Ashanti, you must begin by realizing that all descent is exclusively through the female line. The law of succession to the "stool," or throne, as well as all laws dealing with the inheritance of property, are based on this one fact, but these laws are so complicated and so bound up with ancient customs, rites and traditions that I dare not attempt to describe them to you in my own words, and remembering also the Ashanti proverb that "One falsehood spoils a thousand truths," I think it will be far safer for me to quote Captain Rattray once more.

He maintains that under this system of matrilineal descent the Queen-Mother would far outrival the importance of man as regards position and power, were it not for her inferior physique which prevents her from fighting alongside of her people in battles. His reason for this very strong opinion is, "a King's son can never be a King, but the poorest woman of royal blood is the potential mother of a King."

Formerly her influence was supreme, and even now she remains the real power behind the throne. When the choice of a new chief had to be decided upon, it was the Queen-Mother who had the most to say in the

matter, she would discuss the question with her own people, and having made her choice then send word to the sub-chiefs and elders, bidding them discuss a possible nominee, but no one would have dared place a chief upon the "stool" unless the Queen-Mother had approved of the choice, which proved invariably to be her own. Keeping in mind this curious fact that the son of the King can never inherit, you can realize how puzzling it must have been for the people to understand that David was the heir to the "stool" or throne of the British Empire.

I, as the daughter of the daughter of "the Great White Queen," would have been far simpler to explain, but however strange and bewildering our customs and behaviour may seem to them, they accept without question the fact that the laws whereby we are governed are different from their own, and they greeted David with overwhelming loyalty and delight. I hear from all sides that his great Palaver at Kumasi was simply marvellous.

Before continuing the tale of this long journey to Yeji, I must tell you more about the famous Queen-Mother of Mampon, alas, this wonderful old lady died a short while ago. It was she who, as senior Queen-Mother of Ashanti, organized and directed the presentation of the wedding gift to Mary<sup>1</sup> from all the Queen-Mothers and women of Ashanti. It consisted of an exact replica of her own silver stool at Mampon, as well as some exquisitely woven Ashanti cloths which were presented by the chiefs. She entrusted these precious offerings to Decima to convey to Mary, and at the same time delivered a most beautiful and touching speech. I am enclosing a translation of it as I am sure it will interest you and give you some idea of the intense love and loyalty of this remarkable Queen-Mother.

<sup>1</sup> H R H The Princess Mary, Viscountess Lascelles

"Lady Guggisberg, wife of His Excellency,<sup>1</sup>

"I place this stool in your hands It is a gift on her wedding for the King's child, Princess Mary

"Ashanti stool-makers have carved it, and Ashanti silversmiths have embossed it

"All the Queen-Mothers who dwell here in Ashanti have contributed towards it, and as I am the senior Queen-Mother in Ashanti, I stand as representative of all the Queen-Mothers and place it in your hands to send to the King's child (Princess Mary)

"It may be that the King's child has heard of the Golden Stool of Ashanti That is the stool which contains the soul of the Ashanti nation All we women of Ashanti thank the Governor exceedingly because he has declared to us that the English will never again ask us to hand over that stool

"This stool we give gladly It does not contain our soul as our Golden Stool does, but it contains all the love of us Queen-Mothers and of our women The spirit of this love we have bound to the stool with silver fetters just as we are accustomed to bind our own spirits to the base of our stools

"We in Ashanti have a law which decrees that it is the daughters of a Queen who alone can transmit royal blood, and that the children of a king cannot be heirs

<sup>1</sup>I should say that, at Lady Guggisberg's suggestion, a fund was raised in the Gold Coast and Ashanti to present H R H Princess Mary with a wedding gift The present from the people of the Gold Coast Colony included two gold necklaces of native workmanship, one hung with nuggets of pure gold, and the other chain composed of the highly prized "Aggrey Beads" These beads had been specially collected by Mrs Hutton Mills, an African lady with a profound knowledge of the origin and history of these articles of ornament, which are more precious in the sight of the African than gold itself and are handed down as heirlooms from one generation to another

A traveller, writing about these beads over a hundred years ago, mentions the fact that if one of them was lost or broken in a skirmish a fine of seven slaves was exacted



## 48    LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST

to that stool    This law has given us women a power in this land so that we have a saying which runs

“ ‘It is the woman who bears the man’ (i.e., the king)

“ We hear that her law is not so, nevertheless we have great joy in sending her our congratulations, and we pray the great God Nyankopon, on whom men lean and do not fall, whose day of worship is a Saturday, and whom the Ashanti serve just as she serves Him, that He may give the King’s child and her husband long life and happiness, and finally, when she sits upon this silver stool, which the women of Ashanti have made for their white Queen-Mother, may she call us to mind

(Signed) AMMA SEWA AKOTO

X her mark ”

The making and consecration of the stool was carried out with the most solemn rites and ceremonies, I am including the description which I have copied out from Captain Rattray’s account “The stool-carvers,” he says, “were called before the Queen-Mother and given an egg, a fowl, and some gold dust. They went to the forest and selected a suitable tree of the kind called osese. It exudes a latex—‘tears,’ the natives say—when cut

“In the animistic creed of Ashanti everything in nature, animate or inanimate, has its sunsum (soul or spirit), and the osese tree is no exception. This spirit had therefore to be propitiated, equally to guard against harm resulting to the persons who cut down the tree, as to the person who will eventually sit upon the completed stool. The egg was taken and thrown against the tree-trunk with the following words

“ ‘Osese tree, accept this egg and eat, and when the child of the English King sits upon you let her have long life. May the knife not cut me’

“The gold dust was placed at the foot of the tree, the fowl was killed and its blood sprinkled on the

osese, and the tree was then cut down, the flesh of the fowl was placed on the stump, the log from which the stool was to be carved was then brought to the outskirts of the village, where a little temporary workshop was built, here the stool was carved. It will be noted it was cut out of one solid block. The designs both on the wood and on the silver plates are genuine old Ashanti patterns, which may be seen on ancient pottery, and on the kuduo or vessels which are used on the occasions when 'they purify their souls'

"The stool having been carved, and the silversmiths having done their part, it might seem to be ready for use, but this is not so, as was vividly brought to the writer's notice in the following manner

"The stool was temporarily in his custody, when it was sent for by the Queen-Mother of Mampon. The girl who came to fetch it asked for a cloth to wrap it in 'as she had not bathed that morning' and could not touch it. It was taken down to the courtyard of the Queen-Mother's house, and here the following ceremony took place

"*The consecration of the Stool* The Silver Stool was turned upside down and placed on top of a silk-covered cushion upon a low table. An old copy of the 'Observer' was carefully wrapped round it. The Queen-Mother's first-born daughter and the Queen-Mother seated themselves on their stools. An egg upon a plate, some soot, a knife, and some short sticks were placed on a corner of the table in readiness. The Queen-Mother then broke the egg, allowing the white to fall on the ground, the yolk into the plate. She then spoke as follows

" 'Osese tree, receive this egg and eat, concerning the child of the King of England who is getting married, if she sits upon you let her have long life'

"The daughter frayed out the ends of the sticks and mixed the yolk and the soot. When all was ready, she

and her mother, looking up to the sky with hands uplifted, spoke the following prayer

“ ‘Supreme Being on whom men lean and do not fall, concerning Mary, the child of my Lord the King of England, who is getting married, I pray of you to give her long life and grace I seat her upon this stool ’

“ These religious rites being completed, the Queen-Mother produced out of a handkerchief 14s in silver coins, and these she grouped all around the hollow in the centre of the stool This was the ‘artist’s’ fee, and if not paid the woman who was about to draw the design (        seen on the bottom of the stool) ‘would run the risk of becoming blind ’

“ Amma Agyiman (the daughter) now began to paint on the mixture with one of the little sticks, beginning with the steps round the hollow centre of the stool When this was done the design upon the bottom of the stool was next laboriously drawn, the Queen-Mother from time to time suggesting or showing her daughter what to do

“ The stool was now complete and ready for the ‘daughter of Kings’ to sit upon

“ The following day the stool was carried under an umbrella (an adjunct of royalty) to show to the paramount chief, Osa Bonsu of Mampon ”

To return to my letter

At last we reached Ejura I can never even attempt to describe Ejura, nor the wonderful beauty and peace of that most perfect spot, so far removed from the outside world and buried in the heart of the forest

The way to the District Commissioner’s little bungalow winds about, two thousand feet up along the scarp, and although I quite realized that the road was a triumph of engineering, I was conscious only of the supreme loveliness of the scene The bungalow stands in an open space on the very edge of the scarp, looking



FORCED IN THE NASTY SNOW

villages, at all of which we had to stop and greet the chiefs, escorts of strange horsemen came out to meet us and bring us in, careering wildly round the motor raising clouds of red dust and firing recklessly into the air

We reached Yeju about six o'clock, when it was already quite dark. Alice and I shared the same hut it had been built as a District Commissioner's bungalow, but is now disused, as the station has been abandoned. It was a very comfortable hut, made of "swish," which is sun-baked mud, with a dome-shaped overhanging roof of palm. A broad veranda, the front part of which we used as our sitting-room goes right round the hut, and on it open the two rooms, their only light being through the door on to the veranda. The furniture in my room consists of my bed, bath, table and chair, and three tin boxes arranged against the wall. A piece of rope, which has been fixed across one corner, serves as a clothes-line. Our loads, having come straight through from Kumasi had arrived early in the afternoon, therefore everything was laid out and the bath water boiling when we came in, but the lorry with all the kerosene had failed to turn up, so my first experience of bush life was to wash and dress in the dark. I tried to do my hair by the light of an electric torch, which I held over my shoulder to illuminate my back while my "boy" hooked up my dress. I also stuck in my bath, not having learned how to curl up inside a small tin washing apparatus.

We dined in the open, and soon after ten o'clock came "lights out" and quiet descended on the camp. Next morning I was up at five o'clock, having been roused from my sleep by piteous shrieks issuing from behind the hut, it was the sad procession of my feathered "dash" of the previous day, on its last pilgrimage to the stock-pot.

Our loads had to be ready to start by six, we our-

selves leaving soon after breakfast. Our day's run was ninety-six miles. Immediately after leaving Yeji we crossed the Volta thence proceeding to Salaga where we held a large palaver—more mounted escorts, gun-firing, more clouds of dust and always the intense heat. We reached Palbe in time for lunch. To give you some idea of the heat, can you believe that when I was offered something to drink, it burnt my tongue? The rest-house compound was a series of mud huts with conical shaped palm roofs.

We three, Decima, Alice and I rested after lunch while the Governor and the Staff struggled into uniform to prepare for H.E.'s official entrance into Tamale. He and Decima and the Private Secretary went ahead, Alice, Captain Puckridge and I were to follow in the second car after a certain interval. This was in order that the Governor and I should have our separate receptions on arrival.

When the moment came for my departure, nothing would induce the Crossley to start because of some mysterious engine trouble or ju-ju and therefore, shorn of all splendour, and very conscious of the deprivation of a chauffeur in a scarlet coat, we climbed into an old Buick and rattled off into Tamale. I was very much amused over this contretemps not so the Staff, whose feelings were terribly lacerated by the idea of my arriving in anything but solemn state at the capital of the Northern Territories.

We halted just outside the little town, where the thoughtful Chief Commissioner Major Walker-Leigh, and his charming wife had erected tents and prepared everything for our comfort. Having washed and refreshed ourselves, we returned to our Buick and, escorted by the splendid and picturesque Northern Territories Constabulary proceeded through the long avenue of gorgeous flamboyant trees up to the club, where the Governor had already arrived. Major and

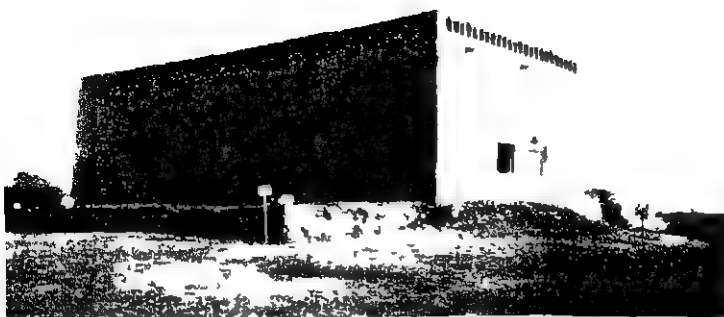
## 54    LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST

Mrs Walker-Leigh, the officers of the little garrison and various officials and their wives, were there to receive us. After the necessary presentations and greetings we had tea and then dispersed to our quarters.

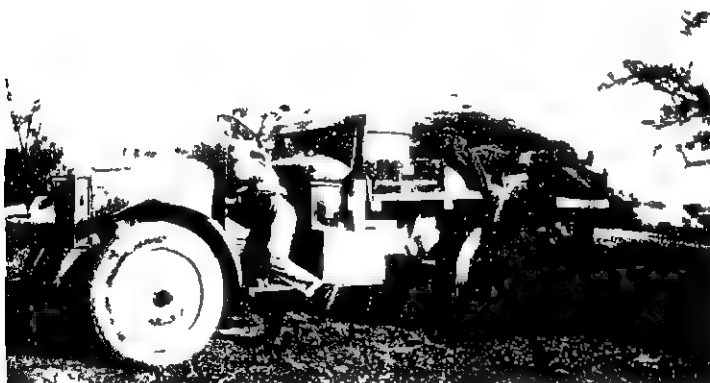
Alice and I again shared the same bungalow, this time a two-storied one resembling a Swiss chalet, the downstairs part consisting of a sitting-room and "chop-room" ("chop" is food) with a wooden staircase leading up to the top veranda, on which opened our two bedrooms. On arrival I found that Malam had unpacked the entire contents of my three tin boxes, in fact every single thing I possessed, and my heart sank in anticipation of having to repack them when orders came to move. HE and Decima are living in small bungalows about a hundred yards away, and the rest of the Staff is housed near by.

The construction of the villages in the Northern Territories is quite different from those in Ashanti. Here the people live in little circular huts of dried mud with pointed grass roofs, a tiny opening in the wall serving the double purpose of door and window. These huts, built in groups of six or eight, are connected by a wall, which gives the village the appearance of a series of small forts. It is the custom for every wife to have her own hut for herself and her children, and *if a man's dwelling-house is limited to one hut, it is a sign of great poverty, implying that he can afford but one wife.*

The chief's compounds are on the same plan, only the huts are far more numerous, and also include a court-house and guest-house. Farther north and in the Frafra country the huts are again different, usually square with flat roofs, these roofs serve a double purpose, namely to dry grain as well as to be observation posts in case of attack. They also are built in groups, an arrow's flight apart, and the villages therefore straggle for miles.



MY QUARTERS AT NAVAKONO N I



"T" TORRY AT ZUARACU N I





'Dr Le Fanu told me it had once taken him four hours to pass through a village

The outfit of these primitive dwellings is extremely simple, a grass mat used for sleeping purposes being the 'only furniture. The household utensils consist chiefly of calabashes, which are used for various purposes bringing water, storing and carrying food to market, or as washing basins and drinking vessels. When travelling, their goods and belongings, in fact all their "Lares and Penates," are neatly packed round or inside the calabash, which is often covered with a net, on the top of which they place their grass mat, and the whole is then poised on their heads. These loads reach the most enormous size, and the amount the women are able to carry is unbelievable.

Earthenware pots are also used for cooking and storing water. The ovens and fireplaces are very unpretentious, a few lumps of "swish" or stones serving as a stand to raise the cooking-pot a few inches from the ground.

But I must leave off wearying you with descriptions of the country and tell you of all we have done since our arrival in this delightful and friendly place.

Our first evening concluded with a charming dinner at the Residency, Major and Mrs Walker-Leigh being our hosts. To our great joy we discovered that they possessed an excellent gramophone, so I need scarcely tell you that we danced after dinner, regardless of the fact that we had begun our day at 5.30 and had motored nearly a hundred miles in the blazing heat. Yesterday morning, which we had intended to spend in a well-earned rest, proved to be somewhat agitated on account of H.E.'s illness and the general upheaval of plans. In the afternoon we drove out to the races and had a most thrilling time.

As the Governor is ill, the official Palaver has been postponed, and so Major Walker-Leigh arranged that I

## 56    LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST

should hold my own Palaver at the conclusion of the races. It was a wonderful scene,—not as gorgeous, perhaps, as our other Palavers have been, and I quite missed the huge state umbrellas and the rich and many coloured cloths of the Ashanti chiefs, but, all the same, these Northern Territories chiefs, accompanied by all their mounted men and strange warriors, are very imposing.

As in Ashanti, we rigidly observed the strict etiquette of paying the first call, and then, when we had returned to our dais, the chiefs came to greet me and presented me with beautiful gifts of leather cushions, bags, and some long grass mats.

I must tell you about some of the chiefs, for they are most important personages. First and foremost is the Na of Yendi, paramount Chief of Dagomba and over-lord of the Konkombas and Chakosis. His official residence is at Yendi, formerly in German Togoland. In 1885 we made a treaty with Germany and divided up the country, Dagomba being cut in half, and in consequence the Na (Chief) lost most of his territory, but when part of Togoland was mandated to Great Britain in 1919, all this land was restored to him and he is once more over-lord of the whole of Dagomba, an area of ten thousand square miles with a population of 153,000 souls.

Many of these chiefs are of most ancient lineage and in some strange manner have managed to preserve a fairly accurate record of their descent. This is all the more remarkable as the country has no literature or historical writings. Major Walker-Leigh has given me a wonderful genealogical tree of the Kings of Yendi, which also deals with the succession to the Stool or Throne of Safulugu. The casual reference to the hundred and eighty children (of whom mercifully one hundred seem to have died) may amuse you, so I am enclosing it.



Its point of land and subjects Saralugu was the next chief of importance to be presented. He also is a Dagomba Chief of the blood and has a territory of four thousand square miles and 55,000 people, while by virtue of his being Chief of Safulugu he has a claim to the Chieftainship of Yendi.

There were a large number of lesser chiefs, the most interesting among them being the Chief of Miong, also a Dagomba Chief of the blood, with a claim to the Stool of Yendi, he has practically no land or subjects under him, but holds the title of The Skin, or Keeper, of the Soul. The skin, which is part of the hereditary possession of the royal house of Yendi, is used as a seat under a large cushion. In an odd way this reminds me of the Coronation Stone at Westminster Abbey.

I must not forget to mention Karaga, another chief of the royal house, who rules over the eastern part of British Dagomba. Do you remember being shown his picture in the Gold Coast Section at Wembley?

At the conclusion of the Palaver the chiefs proceeded to carry out the most extraordinary and unusual dance. They performed it on horseback. As I have described to you their elaborate and cumbersome garments, you will realize that when they were hoisted on to their horses they looked more like the White Knight in "Through the Looking-glass" than anything on earth. Etiquette demands that they should be held in their saddles by their horse-boys, who grasp them firmly round the waist, apparently to keep them in place, the contrast between these heavily garbed riders and the practically naked men on foot was very striking.

The Head Chief opens the ball by taking up his position in the centre of the circle, and the other chiefs career round him, the unfortunate attendants meanwhile having to keep pace with the prancing horses

## 58    LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST

and to endeavour, at the same time, to retain their grip on the riders

Then each chief comes forward and performed his own dance, while his horse-boy declaims his noble deeds and those of his forefathers. This traditional custom of proclaiming the chief's history, past and present, is very valuable, as it is the only manner whereby any family and tribal records are preserved.

With regard to Togoland, I must tell you a very remarkable story. Although Togoland became a German Colony in 1885, many of the tribes, for quite a considerable time, especially those on the coast and those adjoining the Northern Territories, believed and considered themselves to be still under British suzerainty. The following incident, which has been noted by Captain E. T. Mansfield (Record Officer in Togoland), is a striking proof of their loyalty to our rule.

It occurred during an inspection of our troops in 1918, when Captain Mansfield was met by the Head Chief's linguist and a messenger, the latter carrying an old and much stained Union Jack. Being very much puzzled, and also wondering what the history of this old flag could be, Captain Mansfield asked for information about it at the Palaver. The Head Chief then told him that, many years earlier, the Union Jack had been presented to them by their Commissioner, and when the country was handed over to Germany in 1886, orders were issued to the chiefs to surrender it and fly the German flag instead. Many of the chiefs obeyed, but the grandfather of the present one, although he apparently accepted the German flag, kept the British flag, folding it up and hiding it in an earthenware pot, which was then buried, against the time when he would have the right to fly it again. The Chief ended his tale by expressing his deep thankfulness at being once more under British rule.

## LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST 59

You may remember that we took Togoland quite at the beginning of the War, in 1914. It has an area of over thirty-six thousand square miles, of which thirteen thousand has been mandated to us, the rest being under French rule, including the capital, Lome, on the coast, which possesses a very extensive system of railways.

I am suddenly overcome with the terrible fear that all this may sound rather like a guide-book, but you know how thrilled I always am with odd and stray bits of information, and I am so anxious that you should share in all I am learning about this strange land and its still stranger people.

An almost more important moment even than my Palaver came when I started washing my clothes. The washing was not difficult, but the ironing defeated me. Alice and I grew extraordinarily hot over the proceeding, which was watched with the deepest interest by Malam, who stroked his head and murmured at intervals, "Big Missis no good. Big Missis very bad." In the midst of this agitating scene the bugle sounded, and with great relief I dropped my bundle of half-ironed clothes, dressed hastily and proceeded down for "chop." I have just heard that Mrs. Williams, the owner of my friend "Bess" of the "Aba," is a proficient ironer and is going to come to my rescue, so Captain Puckridge is taking up my washing to her bungalow this evening. Life is full of enterprise in the Northern Territories!

Altogether yesterday was a day of wild excitement. It was mail day as well, and the mail van arrived during lunch. Down went knives and forks and we all rushed out on to the veranda and watched the bags being opened, standing round like hungry children waiting to be fed. Alas, my mail was a sad disappointment! I don't suppose that people at home realize how precious news is in a strange land like this. There are

no daily papers, nothing to tell one what is going on in the outside world excepting an occasional very bald and unsatisfying Reuter, and one just longs for news from home

## TAMALE.

*May 5*

HE reappeared yesterday morning and held his official Palaver at 7 30, at which we were all present. He seems much better, but is still in need of rest and care. It is disappointing for him to have missed so much of the fun, because, in addition to the races, we have had a very amusing gymkhana and some excellent polo, in fact, we are having a very gay time.

In the afternoon we visited the lines of the Northern Territories Constabulary. Major Massie, who commands, was very keen that I should see the horses as well as the men's quarters. We were overtaken by a terrific dust-storm, and being scarcely able to stand upright in the clouds of thick red dust, we flattened ourselves against the walls of the hut. The storm increased to such violence that finally we were compelled to take refuge inside, it was scrupulously clean, with a grass mat on the floor serving as a bed. I have already told you that this constitutes their whole furniture. The occupant of the hut was a very fine young woman, with a four-hour-old baby in her arms. For one so young it displayed great interest and did not seem a bit surprised or alarmed at the sudden influx of strange visitors. The mother was busy cooking her lord and master's evening meal.

The storm subsided just as rapidly as it had begun, and we were soon able to emerge from our refuge and continue our tour of inspection, ending up with a rest at Major Massie's bungalow before returning home.

After dinner we went over to the Residency for a





M L UNVEILING THE IRA TRA WAR MEMORIAL /UARAGU VI



delightful dance Our arrival there was attended with great peril just as we reached the house a terrific tornado began, and on getting out of the motor we were in danger of being not only drowned by the rain, which was coming down in sheets, but also of being blown away by the storm It was very disappointing, because Mrs Walker-Leigh had taken infinite trouble over all the arrangements, but being the most splendid and dauntless hostess, and quite imperturbable, she watched with the utmost cheerfulness the destruction of her pretty decorations The rain extinguished all the little fairy lamps in a second, the water was rushing along like a flood, everything was soaking and dripping wet, chairs, tables, rugs, carpets, all had to be stacked on the veranda But in one short hour the storm was over and we were sitting out under the stars

To my intense delight I have been riding a good deal since I came here There is one great drawback to the Coast and Ashanti, which is that, owing to the tsetse fly it is quite impossible to keep horses Here, in the Northern Territories, there are certain strips of country where the tsetse does not breed, for instance, the whole of this district, as well as that of Zuaragu, Navarongo, Lawra, Wa and Bole, are *quite immune from it, although the whole of the Gambaga Plateau, which lies farther north, is infested with this horrible fly*

You can't imagine how delicious our rides are in the early morning We start at sunrise, about 6 30, and return home just in time for breakfast

I have just come back from visiting the veterinary establishment This has been started as an attempt to improve the native breeds of cattle, sheep and pigs, and so far has proved quite successful The pig of the country is singularly ugly, a mixture between dusty red and rusty black, with an abnormally long

snout and a high, very arched back    The native cattle are very like the zebu with a hump on their backs    You know my aversion, not to say terror, of cows, and I considered myself extremely brave to walk about among these remarkably docile and mild-eyed animals    The two imported bulls, a pedigree shorthorn and Herefordshire, were less friendly, and I was thankful that they were fast and secure in their stables    It must have been a fearful undertaking to get these precious beasts up to Tamale, they had to travel the whole way from the coast in fly-proof cages, first by train to Kumasi and then by lorry to Tamale

There are in all about 60,000 cattle in the Northern Territories, only 1 % of which goes to the coast    All the meat otherwise consumed in the whole Colony, including Ashanti, is imported from French Territory

The profession of herdsman is solely confined to the Fulanis    These Fulanis are quite a distinct tribe from the ordinary African and obviously possess a strong Arab strain, their hair is straight and lank, their features aquiline and their skin a lightish brown    The African is only too willing to entrust the care of his cattle to these men, who will often act as herdsmen to a whole village in exchange for food and lodging, and then pass on to another place    It is very interesting to note the power they have over their animals, which probably comes from the fact of their always living alongside them and making friends of them in the same manner as the Arab does with his horses    Each Fulani herdsman has charge of a certain number of cattle, they know his voice and obey him in the most remarkable manner    I noticed this afternoon a herdsman give a low whistle, and, right away from the farthest corner of the enclosure, a benign-looking cow raised her head, listened, and then slowly walked towards him the rest of the herd following obediently in her wake

TAMALE

*May 7*

Yesterday afternoon I had a very interesting and touching little ceremony to perform the laying the foundation-stone of the first European hospital in the Northern Territories. Hitherto there has been neither hospital nor white nurse nearer than Kumasi, which shows what a European has to face in case of illness. It means being nursed in your own bungalow, dependent upon the kindness of your friends or the ministrations of your "boy". Of course, I do not mean to say that there are no doctors in the Northern Territories, but the absence of all professional nursing and comforts during illness is a hardship that one cannot realize at home, especially if one takes this climate into consideration.

No one in our party, except myself, had ever laid a foundation-stone, so I had to draw up the programme and prepare the ceremonial. Not the least interesting part of the little ceremony was the circumstance that my trowel and mallet, with the box containing them, were made and presented by the African workmen of the Public Works Department. It was entirely their own thought and wish to do so.

The Governor made a charming speech, to which I had to reply. Then, a copy of the Government "Gazette" and current coins not being forgotten, the stone was "well and truly laid".

What a curiously small place the world is! Imagine my astonishment at discovering that the officer in command of the Guard of Honour on the day of our arrival here is the son of Mr Colbeck, the Chaplain who was with Christie when he died<sup>1</sup>. It is strange how continually I am meeting people who were connected with

<sup>1</sup> Prince Christian Victor died at Pretoria during the South African War.

Christle during his time out here, and all the more surprising as it is thirty years since he was in the country. This morning I interviewed his former "boy," Charles, who is now with Mr. Beal, head of the Veterinary Department. Charles had been one of the steward boys in the Staff mess and then was attached to Christle. It makes me very proud to realize how universally Christle's memory is loved and honoured by all who knew him and worked with him. even his African "boy" has not forgotten "his Prince." Charles told me a great deal about him and how splendid he had been during that awful and trying march from Cape Coast to Kumasi, so full of consideration and care for his men, never thinking of himself, and always cheerful and happy.

What a delightful week this has been, and what fun we have had! The kindness and hospitality I have met with have been boundless, and I shall be very sorry to take leave of all these charming friends who have made my stay here so happy. These constant partings are the sad part of a swift journey such as ours. In a country of such strange loneliness and remoteness as West Africa, friendships are quickly formed. It is a wonderful community of interest and work, joys and difficulties shared together, in fact, Tamale is like a happy family instead of a small garrison station.

#### NAVARONGO.

*May 10*

What a strange weird country this is, but so interesting and quite unlike anything I have ever seen! We left Tamale last Thursday, our loads being ready in their respective lorries at six o'clock, breakfast at 6.30, and we ourselves starting at 7.30. During the first part of our journey all was well, with nothing to record of particular interest, the country flat and



MRS. HARRINGTON STUART AND M. F. OUTSIDE OUR  
QUARTERS AT ZUPACT N. I.



BOWMEN AT ZUPACT N. I.



U. S. SERVICE MEN AT ZUPACT





rather monotonous. But about twenty miles out from Tamale our troubles began. We had reached the Nasia district, which even in the dry season is always more or less of a swamp. Perhaps we ought to have been surprised, because, on the previous evening, a messenger had come in, reporting to Major Walker-Leigh that the roads were in good order in spite of the tornadoes of the preceding days. What, however, we did not know was that in the interval between the messenger's arrival at Tamale and our departure there had been ten hours of torrential rain, making the road utterly impassable.

All our six cars and all the seventeen lorries (Major Walker-Leigh having now added his Ford to the procession) were completely bogged and waterlogged. Mercifully the villagers had been warned to stand by in case of a break-down, so we had plenty of willing hands to help us. Every lorry had to be unloaded. The road was strewn with tin boxes, baths, suit-cases, "chop-boxes," beds (done up in their canvas covers, resembling giant sausages), in fact the entire paraphernalia of our camp, the heat indescribable, the noise even more so. Natives always chatter when excited, and when you have a hundred Africans, all arguing simultaneously as to the best means of rendering assistance, the result is pandemonium.

I sat bland and undisturbed on an upturned "chop-box" in the shade of a bush and watched the others work. Apart from the tin boxes, the scenery was really lovely. I have already described the "orchard country" to you, with its wide open spaces, low trees and scrub, all dry and parched from the drought and the "Harmattan" (a burning wind that blows steadily from December to March). There are, however, surprising splashes of vivid green, hinting at hidden bogs and water-holes, and in the midst of this curious mixture of swamp and dryness, fields of white lilies, so many

that one could almost imagine there had been a fall of snow. These lilies are peculiar to the swamps of West Africa, they are rather like a larger and more delicate amaryllis—some snow-white, some tipped and veined with pink.

Deserting my "chop-box" I plunged recklessly through the long grass to gather armfuls of these wonderful flowers. I am making a collection of bulbs, including the orange lily of Sierra Leone, which grows in a positive riot all over the Coast, and another variety called the spider lily. I feel sure these bulbs ought to do well in a damp hot-house in England.

During all this time the rest of the party, with the help of the villagers, had been busy constructing a rough corduroy road of branches and trees, over which our cars and lorries bumped and floundered to comparatively firm ground.

When all our belongings had been collected and loaded up, the procession was started once more, but broke down again in a very short while. I lost count at last of the number of times we were hauled out of holes and bogs, but eventually we reached Walwale, our halting-place for lunch, at 2.45.

We have left the Dagomba district and are now in Northern Mamprussi, which stretches to the north from the eastern mandated territory, to the Sissili River, and includes Gambaga, Bawku and Navarongo.

At Walwale we were met by the Paramount Chief and held the usual Palaver before continuing our journey to Zuaragu, where we were to spend the night.

Most of the natives in Northern Mamprussi belong to the Fra-Fras, really a variety of tribes, but all under the Chief or Na of Mamprussi. The word Fra-Fra means "wild man," and it may have come from the curious sound they make as their salutation or welcome—squatting on the ground and clapping their hands.

We recrossed the Volta, to find once more an entire change of scenery less scrub, rocks and boulders, and in the distance the Tong hills, a range of mountains of that wonderful misty blue only seen in this strange West Africa

The natives are very primitive both in custom and costume. The Mohammedan is usually fully clothed, while the pagan wears nothing at all. The Mohammedan wears loose trousers fastened round the ankle, with the usual long flowing robes over them, sometimes he wears a cap,<sup>1</sup> sometimes a turban, drawing a fold of the latter over his mouth, he has long soft leather boots, reaching above the knee and ornamented with fancy patterns of different colours. The spurs look very formidable, with short iron spikes instead of rowels, and a quantity of charms are worn suspended round the neck and waist, consisting of little leather bags usually containing scraps of the Koran.

The chiefs and more important members of the community have any amount of these metal plaques sewn on to the short coats they wear under their long robes.

The ordinary villagers and pagans, as I have already told you, are absolutely naked except for the minimum of loin-cloth, which hangs from the waist on a thin string of twisted horsehair reaching half-way down to the knee. But what these men lack in clothing they make up for in the strangeness and variety of their head-dress. It may be a calabash smeared with white mud, or a closely fitting cap of elaborately plaited straw, decorated with the horns of an ox, or a plume of horsehair, while yet another may be covered with cowrie shells. There seems no end to the fashion in hats in the Northern Territories!

I have been "dashed" with some beautiful bracelets, one of them being a huge carved ivory ring, two

<sup>1</sup> Rather like a brewer's cap, hanging over on one side and decorated with metal plaques

## 68    LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST

inches deep    the chief who "dashed" me took it off his own arm, which adds to its interest    The others are typical Moshu bracelets of marble and of enormous weight    I shall make quite a sensation when I appear in London with these splendid but barbaric ornaments

Bead necklaces are of course very popular among the women    Their dress, however, consists of a small bunch of leaves hanging down behind and fastened round their waist by a narrow string of twisted horse-hair    Sometimes they are very extravagant and have an additional bunch in front    The young and unmarried women dispense with the leaves, and a few strings of beads constitute their full dress, which seems both a practical and economical attire in this hot climate

Like all other Africans, the mothers carry their babies on their backs    The little things sit astride their waists, and are kept in position by a bit of cloth wound round the mother's body    The babies seem to be perfectly happy in this uncomfortable fashion, although their poor little heads wobble about in an alarming manner with every movement that the mother makes

You cannot imagine the charm of these tiny brown people    If one stops and plays with them, they are friendly and confiding    The amusements of a child are the same all the world over    The other day I found one making mud pies

But to return to our journey    We reached Zuaragu in the late afternoon and had a most exciting reception    We had left our cars a little way down the road and walked up towards the centre of the village    In one moment we were literally engulfed in a horde of what seemed to me thousands of wild, shrieking, yelling human beings, pointing their spears at us, and brandishing their clubs over our heads, dancing round us, and all the while shouting at the tops of their voices

Guns were fired into the air, drums beaten, horns blown and other musical and non-musical instruments brought into action. The chiefs and their followers worked themselves up into a positive frenzy, the women standing behind, clapping their hands and encouraging the men, and all the while uttering a peculiar and long-drawn-out cry, impossible to reproduce, though it will echo in my ears for many a long day.

Had we not known that this was meant to be a friendly welcome, it might have been most alarming. At length we disentangled ourselves from the *mêlée* and, still accompanied by this strange escort, were conducted to our quarters.

Alice and I were as usual together in the "swish" house. Decima had one to herself. The Governor and the rest of the Staff were in zana, or bush huts, made of plaited grass and leaves.

My house had two stories, the lower floor being merely an entrance, and, I suppose, used as a place for keeping stores. We crawled up rather a steep and perilous ladder and found ourselves on a broad veranda. The construction of these huts or bungalows is very simple, consisting of a wide veranda and two central rooms. Our loads had just arrived, and in a short while Malam made the welcome announcement that "Bath live, Sah," which meant that my bath was ready. Dinner in the open under the stars brought our day to a close.

Next morning we had a very interesting Palaver. The ceremony being always the same, I need not describe it. We first inspected all the ex-service men, and, at the conclusion, I unveiled a memorial to the Fra-Fra men who had died during the War in Togoland and the Cameroons.

The Fra-Fras were a very war-like and turbulent tribe, giving us a lot of trouble when we first took

over the Northern Territories in 1897, and indeed right up to 1911. For a long time there was a considerable amount of difficulty in curbing their fighting instincts and converting them into a fairly peaceful and obedient people. It is difficult for a native to understand why he should not fight if he wishes to, and therefore it was all the more remarkable that, after having been forbidden by the white man to fight among themselves, when the call came in 1914 for these men to join in the white man's war (about which they knew nothing), their confidence in his word was such that they responded to a man.

The memorial is similar to a Scotch cairn, all the relations of the fallen having brought a stone of granite and placed it in position to the memory of their dead. The stones are of all sizes and shapes, some small, some large, they have been piled up in a rough square on a base of cement, and a tablet bearing this inscription has been inserted in the centre

" IN MEMORY OF THE FRA-FRAS WHO FELL IN THE SERVICE OF THEIR  
KING, 1914-1918 "

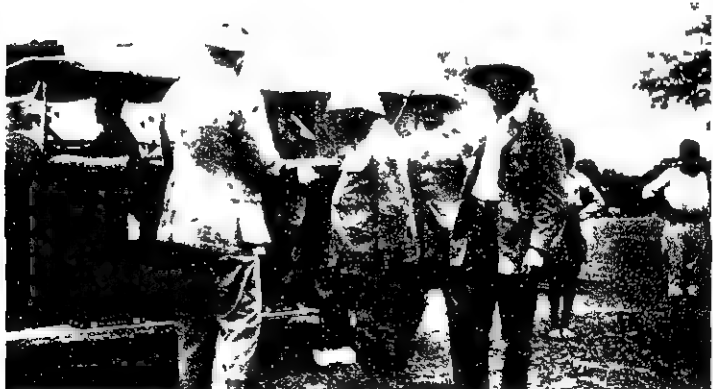
After the unveiling the Governor saluted the memorial, we did the same, and were followed by the ex-service men and all assembled. It was a very impressive sight and made me realize the awful sacrifice demanded of the Empire during the War.

Palaver and unveiling ended, we continued our journey to Navarongo, only thirty miles distant, and arrived in good time for lunch. Our reception here was of the same description as at Zuaragu, but on a still wilder and noisier scale.

This time our quarters are a square mud house with a flat roof from which there is a wonderful view—that is, if you have the energy to climb up the very steep and dangerous flight of steps in the wall. It has the usual veranda with the two central rooms opening off



FRENCH EX-SERVANT MILITARY AT NOBILI



MAJOR WALKER 1ST REG (CCNY) M. MICHEL M. A. HESTING M. POUVEREAU  
AT NOBILI





it. On account of its curious Eastern look I have christened it the "Haïem" (The one at Zuaragu I named the "Hen-roost," because of its perilous ladder)

We remain here three days, so it has been worth while unpacking more than the bare necessities, and my part of the veranda looks quite home-like with books, work and writing materials. It is odd how soon one learns to dispense with all that one considers absolutely necessary to one's comfort in ordinary surroundings. As long as I have my camp-bed, my bath and long chair, and that precious piece of rope for a clothes-line, I am quite happy, even a dressing-table is not essential, for there is usually a window-sill which does admirably instead. But one thing indispensable when travelling in West Africa is your waterproof ground-sheet, in fact, two—one for your bath-mat and one for your bed-side. A mud floor, however practical in this climate, harbours unwelcome little visitors, jiggers and crawly things fatal for bare, or even stockinged feet. I have a grass mat as well, but that is really a luxury.

My daily life in camp is very simple. I rise at six o'clock every morning, returning in time for eight o'clock breakfast, then I read or write, or mend my clothes. When necessary Alice and I petrol our hair, which occupies us fully until lunch at 12.30. Meals are always in the Governor's bungalow. This necessitates our turning out into the scorching sun, and the soil being full of laterite (iron ore), the heat radiates from the ground and positively burns your feet through the soles of your shoes.

Very often I go across and spend the morning with Decima on her veranda. I read aloud, or we talk while she does her sewing. The other day she told me a very pretty story which she had heard long ago from her favourite "boy," James, he has been years in her service and has always gone with her on her "far

bush " treks in Nigeria and on the Gold Coast    I will give it to you in his " pidgin English " as near as I can remember the words    It relates to the birth of the moon    " One time all earth be sun, he shine all time, and sun he get tired and he be lonely , he go bush to catch wife    He find wife under tree and he take her walk    One day they come to sea, and she say, ' I fit to bathe, you no come '    She go far sea and swim plenty, and when she come out she all pale, and sun he look and try catch her, but she say, ' No, I fear too much , I shine by night, you shine by day '    She run and he go try catch her, but he no find her, so now sun all time he go follow moon "

I am not sure whether this belief in the unsuccessful pursuit of the moon by the sun holds good in the Northern Territories    The Dagombas have very decided beliefs about the moon    She is supposed to die every month in giving birth to a small child (I presume the new moon)    An eclipse is a palaver between the sun and the moon, and when neither of the heavenly bodies is visible, God has taken them into His secret keeping    The Daboyas, on the other hand, say that though the moon dies every month, she comes to life again in three days

Eclipses, meteors and shooting stars all denote events of importance, and though the superstitions vary amongst the different tribes, meteors are universally held to be the sign of the approaching death of a king    In Moshi the meteor crossing the sky from west to east means the king's death, while from east to west, the death of the high priest

To return to my daily routine—after lunch the blazing sun has to be faced once more, and we return to our quarters    Then, according to the custom of the country, as well as in obedience to the doctor's orders, we rest during the fiercest heat of the day    Anyone with any knowledge or experience of the tropics will

realize the wisdom, I might say the necessity, of this rule, especially on a tour such as ours. Occasionally I join the rest of the party for tea, but more often Alice and I have it together on our veranda. At sundown the camp comes to life again. Maybe there is a Palaver, or some native races and dances, or I go for a walk and explore the village and surroundings until it is time to dress for dinner, we dine at 7.30.

After dinner we sit out under the stars, review the events of the day and make plans for the morrow, finally, about 9.30, escorted by Captain Puckridge carrying my lantern, Alice and I return home to bed.

Taking the difficulties of transport into consideration, as well as the conditions under which meals have to be prepared, the food is really excellent. Of course there is a certain sameness about it, as is always the case when one is dependent on tinned provisions. Except for the inevitable chicken and an occasional wild guinea-fowl, bush meat seems difficult to procure. Our only vegetables are onions and tomatoes, neither of which do I touch. Yams take the place of potatoes. You would find the condensed milk a sore trial, as well as the tinned butter, which is usually in an oily or semi-fluid condition and has to be helped with a spoon.

As it would be impossible to carry sufficient stores with us to last the whole tour, a very practical system of food dumps has been devised, these have been established at various stages along our route and will enable us to replenish our depleted larder as we proceed on our journey. It is really wonderfully well thought out and organized, and is all due to the strenuous labours of Commander Whitfield during the past months.

But travelling in West Africa is not all child's play, however much you may enjoy it. Apart from transport and food difficulties, there is always the climate

## 74    LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST

to be reckoned with. Hitherto the name for the Coast has been "the white man's grave". This is an exaggeration, but for many is perilously near the truth. Much has been done to better the conditions of life in West Africa through improved sanitation, easier and quicker means of communication, and better bungalows, but no human power can ever alter the climate and its subtle dangers. The actual temperature is really not so very high as compared with other tropical countries, but the humidity is far greater, at least in Ashanti and on the actual Coast.

The sun, however, is the real enemy of the white man. Its rays can only be described as poisonous, why, I cannot explain, but I believe the ultra-violet ray has something to do with it. I am not scientific enough fully to understand the reason. Between the hours of sunrise and sunset it is absolutely imperative to wear a sun helmet, and when travelling, riding or working in the open, a spine-pad is an indispensable part of your kit.

Do you remember how I rebelled at the idea of wearing such an ugly and cumbersome arrangement down my back, and protested that I had never done so on my previous wanderings in the tropics? Now I must confess that I find it the greatest comfort, it gives a sense of security.

The daily five grains of quinine become, in the tropics, as much a habit as the bath before dinner. Every drop of drinking-water has to be boiled and filtered, sometimes our water has had to be filtered as many as six times before it was fit to drink. On account of the intense damp, linen sheets are banned, but one soon gets accustomed to sleeping on blankets. Another precaution not to be disregarded is mosquito boots, which have to be worn in the evening. The little biting fiends leave you in comparative peace by day, but as soon as it becomes dark they bring a con-



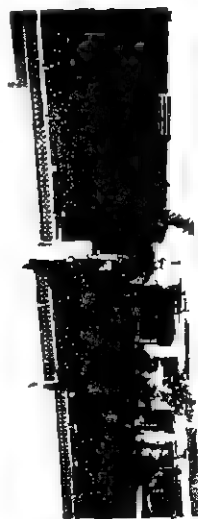
CONVENT OF THE WHITE SISTERS



A VISIT TO THE SCHOOLS



LA SALLE AND HIS BISHOP



OUR QUARIES

OUGADOUGOU



centrated attack to bear on your feet and ankles. My mosquito boots are pain and grief to me—they are hideous—the only part of my otherwise excellent outfit that is a complete failure, and my vanity suffers severely. All my other clothes are so smart, as well as serviceable and neat, that I am particularly offended. My "bush kit" consists of breeches cut and fashioned according to my own design, just like riding-breeches, but of a fine washing zephyr, a short skirt just below the knee, of that sunproof "Solaro" material, and a silk shirt. Long field boots, suitable for riding or walking, complete my attire. In camp I wear just ordinary summer clothes. I find my *crêpe-de-Chine* dresses by far the most practical, they wash splendidly and always look fresh and cool.

Malam has developed unexpected talents and virtues, he can both wash clothes and sew. It is an immense relief, as now he can keep my very simple wardrobe tidy and I am no longer worried over my mending and sewing on of ribbons, but as he cannot darn stockings, I have still to cope with that difficult task. These are all very domestic details, but they may interest you and also help you to picture to yourself my life in West Africa.

Again the mail has been a bitter disappointment this time through its non-arrival. We were worked up to a high pitch of excitement through the promise of its coming in yesterday. Of course it did no such thing. Then the optimistic Private Secretary said it would arrive to-day, but it is now sunset and there is little prospect of that strange wire-covered van appearing before we leave early to-morrow morning, for Ouagadougou.

Yesterday morning Mr. Castellane (the Provincial Commissioner), Captain Puckridge and I rode up to the Monastery of the White Fathers. These monks are a French order and have charge of all the R C

## 76    LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST

**Missions in Africa**    The Superior at Navarongo is a French Canadian, Father Morin by name, and most charming. The Fathers gave us a warm welcome, and were very excited and delighted to hear that I had seen so much of their work in Algiers and Tunis and that I was a friend of Père de Lattre <sup>1</sup>

You may perhaps remember that during those many weeks I spent at Tunis, some years ago, I used to help him with his excavations and researches amongst the ruins of ancient Carthage.

We were received outside the Monastery, where we dismounted, and, leaving our ponies in the shade of a very inadequate tree, were conducted to the refectory, where we all sat in a circle and conversed in a strange mixture of French and English. Then wine and cakes were brought in and handed round. Father Morin, in apologizing for the humble fare, explained that monks were not in the habit of entertaining Princesses in the wilds of West Africa, and as they themselves were forbidden to drink wine, all they could offer me was that provided *pour la Messe*. I was greatly touched by this proof of their desire to honour me.

We were shown all over the Monastery, including the church and also the new school and dispensary, for in addition to their missionary efforts, they render *most valuable service by nursing and doctoring* the sick, thus gaining the confidence of the natives as well as relieving their sufferings.

I have always had a great admiration for the White Fathers. They combine such wonderful self-sacrifice and devotion with practical common sense.

We are just recovering from the worst tornado I have yet experienced. A tornado seems to overwhelm you in a moment. A few clouds on the horizon, a faint rumble of thunder, nothing alarming enough to indicate to the stranger and the uninitiated what is in

<sup>1</sup> Father Superior of the White Fathers at Carthage



store for them, and then, suddenly, the darkened heavens, a rushing wind, a terrific clap of thunder and blinding lightning. Torrents of rain descend like a solid wall, converting everything into a tearing flood.

To-day I think the scene inside my bungalow was even worse than outside, it was comic as well as pathetic. Water was everywhere it streamed through the roof on to our heads, in at the windows, through the walls, even rising up through the floor, and it poured like a river along the veranda down the steps into the open. We paddled about, inches deep in red muddy water, trying to save our belongings from utter destruction, while our "boys" and orderlies rushed to the rescue and started baling with every basin and jug they could lay hands on.

The storm raged for about two hours. It is now a beautiful evening, fine and calm, just as if nothing had occurred. The Staff had a very poor time, as their bush huts were completely washed out, and Major Walker-Leigh tells me his camp-bed is "up to its knees in water."

My letters get longer and longer and are now assuming the proportions of a three-volume novel, in spite of which I have given you only a very bare outline of our doings and have told you comparatively little of the customs of these strange people. I have been reading as much as I can about them. Major Walker-Leigh and the various District Commissioners have been most kind in supplying me with all sorts of odds and ends of interesting information, but apart from official reports very little has been published concerning the Northern Territories.

In contrast to the Zulus and other warrior tribes of South Africa, the man does all the heavy work in the fields, such as the tilling and preparation of the soil, the woman assisting only in the sowing of the crops and gathering in of the harvest. Of course the

entire work of the household rests on her shoulders she winnows, grinds and pounds the corn and prepares all the food for her lord and master, she fetches the water from the pools, which are sometimes at a distance from the village, and that entails a very long and tiring walk twice a day, bearing a heavy load

The young women are rarely sent out to collect firewood, as this duty is usually assigned to the old women of the village, for two reasons first, that the older ones are not supposed to be strong enough to carry a heavy water-pot twice a day from the pool, and secondly, because the wood has to be gathered in the bush or in unfrequented places, and it is considered less likely that the old ladies will dally by the way or enter into conversation with stray young men whom they might happen to meet by the road

The children always accompany the mothers, the babies strapped on their backs, while those able to walk alone toddle alongside. The children are trained from an incredibly early age to carry head loads, and one frequently sees a baby of not more than two years old with a small calabash or a yam on its head. It is this practice and early training which gives the native, both man and woman, their splendid carriage and dignity of movement

Polygamy is of course the recognized custom of the country among Mohammedan and pagan alike. There seems to be no fixed rule as to the number of wives allowed, but it is generally dependent on the wealth of the husband. A poor man can afford only one, while a chief may boast of a hundred or more

The Ashantis have some very unpleasantly true proverbs with regard to wives, such as, "When you have five wives you have five tongues," and "A wife is like a blanket when you cover yourself with it, it irritates you, and yet if you cast it aside, you are cold." I suppose these truths also apply to

the women of the Northern Territories, in fact to our sex all the world over, for, once again to quote the Ashanti, "All women are alike"

There are no very distinctive marriage ceremonies among the pagans. The young man first approaches the mother of the lady he wishes to marry and seeks to obtain her goodwill by presenting her with some small gifts. If she views his suit with favour, he applies to both parents for their formal consent and tells them how much he can pay them as a marriage present in the form of cloth and cowries, in exchange for his bride. In cases of divorce, the husband demands the repayment of the marriage present, and it is, therefore, to the interest of the parents that the woman should prove herself an obedient and law-abiding wife.

On the whole the women are well treated and have little to complain of, though they occupy a very inferior position as compared with their sisters in Ashanti.

In the Northern Territories the inheritance always descends in the male line, though not necessarily from father to son, except among the Dagombas and Moshis. In Mamprussi, as well as in the Wa and Bole districts, it is the eldest surviving brother of the late chief who succeeds, and in Daboya the eldest son of the chief's next brother. Here the sovereignty must always pass to a nephew.

OUAGADOUGOU,  
LA HAUTE VOLTA,  
L'AFRIQUE OCCIDENTALE

May II

This imposing address will tell you that we have arrived in French territory. I am so bewildered and mentally out of breath through all I have done and seen during the past twelve hours that I fear I shall have great difficulty in giving you a clear description of our

trek from Navarongo and the various incidents of our arrival and reception at Ouagadougou. But I will do my best and begin at the very beginning by telling you that, according to my daily routine, I was awake and up at five, six o'clock saw all our baggage packed and ready to start.

The order has gone forth that our transport must be reduced, so Alice and I are sharing a lorry, and "F," the one allotted to me at Accra, will henceforth convey all our worldly possessions. The last half-hour before leaving camp is always somewhat uncomfortable and disorganized. Although the "breakfast lorry" is the last to leave, the "boys" have begun loading up before our departure, which means that all our tables and chairs are torn away from under us and we are left to sit or perch about as best we can. Decima and Alice wisely retire to their respective motors and here quietly await the word "go." I wander about between the two and am no doubt terribly in the way. When H E appears on the scene the procession starts.

I ought to have mentioned that the great agitation of the past two days has been the question of what we ladies were going to wear on our arrival at Ouagadougou, for you see that clothes retain their importance even in "far bush." I was very firm and decided in my views on the subject, and declared that nothing would induce me to motor a hundred miles in the blazing African sun dressed in party clothes, thin stockings and smart shoes. I had made up my mind to appear in "bush kit," i.e. short skirt, shirt and high boots. I am glad to say that my practical common sense gained the day—at least, so I imagined, until Decima issued forth from her hut after lunch at Nobili clad in a Paris creation of spotless white drill. I think she regretted it, for never have I experienced a more trying journey, nor such heat. The sun alone was sufficiently fierce to satisfy the demands of the most



FRENCH WAR MEMORIAL AT OUGADOUGOU



ardent of sun-worshippers, and we had to endure a burning hot wind laden with fine sand which lashed our faces to ribbons. I was painfully aware of rivulets of ochre-coloured mud trickling down my cheeks, but tried to comfort myself with the knowledge that every one was as hot or even hotter than I was, for H E and all the Staff had to be in uniform in honour of the French.

Our first halt had been at the frontier, a distance of ten miles from Navarongo. We were met by M Michel (Commandant du Cercle r  re classe), M Pouverau, whose official position would correspond to a District Commissioner in our service, and M Albert Hesling, son of the Governor of Ouagadougou. After the necessary presentations and introductions, much bowing and exchanging of compliments, we continued our journey to Nobili, a further run of thirty miles, where, thank goodness, we were to lunch and rest. The whole journey from Navarongo to Ouagadougou is one hundred and ten miles.

On arrival at Nobili there were more presentations, and then, after inspecting the Guard of Honour and all the ex-service men, we walked across to the Rest House compound. It was of a fair size and consisted of about a dozen little "swish" huts, each one surrounded by a low wall, and in the centre of the compound a specially constructed "bush hut" for our "chop". Arm-in-arm with Monsieur Michel, and followed by all the French officials, I was conducted to my hut. I assure you it was an achievement to crawl into it without bumping my head, for it had only one very low narrow opening, which served the double purpose of window and door, and was quite dark inside, but deliciously cool and restful after the fierce glare of the sun. In her charming and gentle manner Alice expressed her doubts as to how we could possibly see to "tidy up" with no light, and no furniture—just

## 82    LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST

four bare mud walls—and where and how were we to spread out our few necessary *objets de toilette*? I suggested using the narrow space between the hut and its surrounding wall as our dressing-room, since the grass roof sloping down made it quite sunproof, and the flat top of the wall would do admirably as a dressing-table.

While we were debating this possibility, Captain Puckridge arrived with our dressing-cases, and then disappeared, to return in a few minutes bearing an enormous earthenware pot full of water. In spite of its contents being more like pea-soup than water, we hailed it with joy and soon rejoined the rest of the party as clean and tidy as was possible under the circumstances. Lunch was the next and most welcome item on our programme. As there was a slight shortage of chairs, some of the Staff had to sit on "chop boxes," but nothing mattered or interfered with the cheerfulness and high spirits of the company.

M. Michel sat next to me and we soon became firm friends. In the course of conversation I told him that I admired the boots of M. Albert and M. Pouvereau; they were made of native leather, M. Albert's being purple and those of M. Pouvereau red. At once M. Michel promised that the "cordonnier indigène" would wait on "Madame la Princesse" that very evening and measure me for a pair. I wonder what the result will be! I trust more successful than my detested mosquito boots, certainly their colour ought to make up for any deficiency in size or fit.

But far more thrilling than even the prospect of purple boots was Monsieur Michel's casual remark that ice was obtainable at Ouagadougou and that if I wanted any he would give instructions for a block to be sent over to my quarters as soon as I arrived. Our French friends could not understand the excitement this announcement produced, as at Ouagadougou ice is



the first necessity of life I am not sure that some of us did not utter suppressed cheers at the thought of a really cold drink in the near future, and certainly it is well worth motoring a hundred miles in the pitiless African sun, if ice awaits you at your journey's end (You are, I suppose, aware that we have seen no ice since we left Accra)

When the double excitement of coloured boots and ice had subsided and we had finished lunch, I was conducted, again arm-in-arm with M Michel back to my hut, where I found that Captain Puckridge had most thoughtfully extracted our chairs from "F" lorry and we were able to have quite a good rest. But, alas, only for one short hour! Then came the summons to reassemble and start off on the last lap to Ouagadougou

By this time it was three o'clock, and if possible the heat was greater than ever not an atom of shade along that road and always the same burning dust-laden wind. The scenery was distinctly uninteresting, scarcely any villages to be seen, just a few isolated huts and far less vegetation than on our side of the frontier. I must, however, own that the road was very good. The French, it seems, attach enormous importance to their roads and regard them as a most essential part in the development of their African colonies. The construction and maintenance of the roads are relegated to the chiefs, as one of the duties they owe to the French administration—the work may almost be regarded as a form of taxation—and it is directed and superintended by French officials. We, on the other hand, have quite a different system, our roads being made and maintained out of money voted by Government for that purpose.

We have two sorts of roads those maintained by the Public Works Department with gangs of paid labourers, and those of the Political Service constructed

## 84    LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST

under the direction and supervision of the District Commissioner, kept in repair by the chiefs and his people, all of whom are paid out of "road money" assigned to the different District Commissioners. Each chief is responsible for his section, and the natives are bound to put in twenty-four days of road cleaning during the year, but I understand they very rarely do so.

The Public Works Department in the Northern Territories has about two hundred and ninety miles of road to keep up, the Political Service has eight hundred and fifty—a figure which includes all roads of the eleven districts in the Northern Territories. The annual vote of £1,500 was raised to £3,000 this year to enable the new road from Bole to Bamboi to be made. The Public Works Department has a larger vote, and their roads from Prang to Zuaragu via Yeji and Tamale, and from Tamale to Yendi, cost £13,000.

Each District Commissioner has a certain number of native head roadmen who are paid at the rate of £3 a month, but this is a separate grant and not included in the ordinary "road money."

After instructing you on the difference between the French and British system of road-making in West Africa, let me tell you that we halted about five miles from Ouagadougou. I cannot tell you the relief it was to get out of the car and stretch our stiff limbs, and as at this particular spot Providence had kindly provided a few stunted trees, we tried to remove some of the dust from our burning faces under their so-called shade and to prepare for the arrival of M. Hesling, the Governor of La Haute Volta. These trees were our rendezvous with M. Hesling. We were rather in advance of our time, but even so I was still busily occupied with my face lotion and powder when he arrived, long before I was prepared for the official meeting. Everything therefore had to be hurriedly stuffed into my bag,



JE JU NLS AT OUCADOUOU



HARVEST DANCE OUCADOUOU



to enable me to advance with becoming dignity to greet the French Governor

M Michel stepped forward and presented the Governor to me. I, in my turn, presented Alice and Captain Puckridge. H E introduced Decima and presented his Staff. M Hesling, in his turn, presented the French Staff. In fact, there were so many presentations and counter-presentations, bowings and exchange of compliments as well as inquiries as how "Madame la Princesse" had survived the heat of the journey, that my poor brain whirled, especially as all this time we were standing frizzling in the sun.

At length we started, I drove with M Hesling in his car, with Captain Puckridge in attendance, H E was in the second car with M Michel, and the rest of our party, interspersed with our French friends, following. We were a formidable procession, with all our lorries bringing up the rear. M Hesling proved a most agreeable companion, full of interesting information regarding the Colony, and he did not seem to mind being bombarded by my endless questions about the country, the people and their customs. He assured me repeatedly how honoured and delighted they all were to welcome me on French territory, and every one regarded my visit as a renewed proof of the close ties of friendship between France and England.

At length we arrived at our journey's end and entered Ouagadougou, but I fear I shall utterly fail to give you any idea of what our entry was really like, it is almost impossible to describe the scene, with its picturesque and barbaric touches.

The town is extraordinary, and certainly the French have wrought a miracle. Five years ago Ouagadougou was nothing but a native village surrounded by virgin bush and scrub, now it is a large and beautifully planned town with imposing Government and other public buildings, schools, hospitals, barracks, and a

large aerodrome. (Ouagadougou is intended to be one of the most important French air stations in this part of Africa, one might describe it as the junction between their Northern and West African colonies) Broad boulevards have been laid out with avenues of trees and public gardens, in fact, it is a typical Continental town in the heart of Africa. The most remarkable feature of the place is the fact that it is constructed entirely of mud, but the Governor tells me that in a few years it will be rebuilt in stone and cement.

Our escort, which met us at the entrance into the town, appeared to me to be a whole regiment of native cavalry. They lined both sides of the road, and when my car appeared, closed in round it, so that in one moment we were engulfed in a horde of galloping, rearing horsemen careering madly alongside the motor and throwing up clouds of dust (as if we had not had enough during our hundred and ten miles!). Every one was seething with excitement, man and beast alike. Occasionally they charged into us, but no one seemed to mind or take any notice of such a trifle. True M. Hesling murmured at intervals to M. Albert, who was driving the car, "Doucement, Albert, doucement," but that was all.

After the first breathless moments I resigned myself to the heat, dust and noise, and proceeded to enjoy the scene most thoroughly. The streets were beautifully decorated, with hundreds and hundreds of flags (Tricolour and Union Jack), garlands, streamers and banners, with charming words of welcome and goodwill. Thousands of natives of every description and tribe lined the route. At length we reached the big square in front of the Residency and here we left our cars and inspected the Guard of Honour. When that was over, M. Hesling offered me his arm, and, surrounded by the whole French Staff and all the officials, I walked across to the Residency, where I was received by Madame

Hesling, her two daughters, Odette and Alice, Madame Michel, Madame Bailly, the wife of M. Bailly, Chet de Cabinet, and various other ladies. Madame Hesling is charming, very pretty and very elegant, Odette, the elder daughter, aged seventeen, is equally pretty and just engaged to Capitaine Le Roy, who commanded the Guard of Honour, Alice, the younger one, only twelve, is a most attractive child with masses of fluffy fair hair. The ladies were beautifully dressed, and for one brief moment I wondered whether vanity ought not to have taken precedence over common sense with regard to my clothes. I apologized to Madame Hesling for my appearance, but with the most perfect tact all the ladies at once began to compliment me on the admirable cut of my skirt, as well as the perfect fit of my high boots. I think their remarks were quite genuine, but even if they were not, they had the desired result, and I felt that "bush kit" was the only thing suitable for a smart reception in West Africa.

I am now resting on my veranda. Our lornies have arrived, and Malam is busy arranging my things. The wonderful piece of rope has already been fixed across the corner of the room and my clothes hung up. The orderly is boiling water for my bath, so all is well.

I don't think I ever told you of the disaster that occurred to one of our household at Tamale. The day before we left for Zuaragu one of our steward "boys" developed chicken-pox, and as Alice's "boy," John, had been sharing the same hut with the invalid, the doctor advised leaving him behind in quarantine. This meant that Alice would have been left helpless and maid-less—a very serious consideration in the wilds—had not Major Walker-Leigh come to the rescue and offered one of his "boys." Alice accepted with gratitude, and he has proved quite excellent. The only difficulty is that we cannot quite make up our

## 88    LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST

minds as to his name. Of course he has one, but neither Alice nor I can remember it. She sometimes calls him Zani, more often Ali. Since either seems to answer the purpose, he reminds us of the gentleman in "The Hunting of the Snark" who "would answer to Hi or to any loud cry". As I write I can hear Alice appealing alternately to Zani and to Ali to help her in the mysteries of her toilette.

We are all sharing the same quarters, a very imposing mud building with a broad flight of steps leading up on to a wide veranda. Alice's and my rooms are at one end, Decima and H E occupying the opposite end, while the large centre room dividing us is used as a joint sitting and "chop" room. All the rooms open on to another veranda at the back.

I have a whole suite of apartments: a large room with an enormous bed in it, a second equally large room in which I could dress were it not being used as a right-of-way by the "boys" and orderlies, and then a very dark room at the far end, which, as it contains a big round tin pan, I conclude is my "salle de bain". Malam, scorning the tin pan, has ostentatiously unpacked my own bath, he also informs me, "Big bed bad," and has therefore put up my camp-bed on the veranda. I fear he regards everything outside his own country with deep suspicion. I hope that this rather heartless disregard for their furniture will not strike our kind hosts as rude or ungrateful, but I do agree about the bed, and I am sure it would be impossible to sleep in this heat on a thick soft mattress, with masses of equally soft pillows.

The sun is just setting, a ball of fire in a sky of pure opalescent green. Soon will come a brief moment of wonderful twilight, gone before one can realize its indescribable beauty, and then with sudden swift-ness will descend the velvety darkness of the African night.



## LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST 89

As my lanterns do not give very much light, I will therefore stop

\* \* \* \* \*

May 12

Oh, my dear, what a time we have had! I am absolutely breathless with all I have been through since 5.30 this morning, but I will try and give you some idea of what has occurred since I concluded the first part of this letter. Last night we dined at the Residency. It was quite unofficial,—*un petit dîner intime*—just our own party, Monsieur and Madame Hesling, and their two daughters, Monsieur and Madame Michel, Monsieur and Madame Bailly and Captain Le Roy. Having mentioned, in the course of conversation to M. Hesling, that I had been riding a good deal in the Northern Territories, he suggested that I should ride this morning, but a chorus of protests arose from all present. The idea that I should ride was declared an impossibility and far too risky, every horse in the town being pronounced a dangerous animal and unfit for a lady to mount. M. Bailly, however, the only one who did not think that I should *me suicider* if I were to mount one of these ferocious beasts, encouraged me, so it was arranged, notwithstanding many gloomy forebodings on the part of the rest of the company, that I should ride this morning at six o'clock, attended by M. Albert, Captain Le Roy, and Captain Puckridge.

It was a strange and very strenuous performance, this ride of mine at Ougadougou. To begin with, horses and escort arrived half an hour late, the sun being well up and beating down upon us without mercy. My horse looked all right and seemed harmless, but, oh, his mouth! I can compare it only to one of cast iron or reinforced concrete, also my saddle was full of unexpected lumps and creases, which proved

rather painful as the ride proceeded. We trotted gaily down the boulevard and into the open country, and when clear of the town, I perceived I was expected to go *au grand galop*. This I flatly refused to do, since the road was the hardest that man or beast had ever trodden, and very dusty. Not a tree was to be seen for miles and the sun was blazing in my eyes. Eventually, however, we reached a strip of virgin bush through which some paths had been cut, for patriotic reasons named the "Bois de Boulogne," and here we halted to recover breath and mop our streaming faces. I shudder to think what my appearance must have been like, especially if it resembled that of my companions.

It was rather an attractive strip of bush, and we trotted along peacefully in the shade by the edge of a small pond-like lake. During the rainy season this rises and overflows the bank, washing away the paths and converting everything into a seething mass of water. It is almost impossible to imagine the contrast of scene in dry and wet weather. After two hours we returned home, and, though you may not believe it, in spite of the slight discomforts of saddle, heat and dust and my pulling horse, I thoroughly enjoyed my ride. I hope that my companions did likewise, but fear for Captain Puckridge, because his pony, which closely resembled a pedigree shorthorn bull, had pulled to such an extent (he had only a snaffle) that his arm was numb for hours.

On our return we consumed an enormous breakfast, and then hastily changed into smart clothes to await M. Bailly who was to accompany me on my tour of inspection of schools and missions. I was much impressed with the former. Physical drill, I am glad to say, plays a very prominent part in their scheme of education, and I watched some really capable exercises carried out by the African schoolboys. Their



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teachers are mainly French, with the result that the native children learn to speak the language fluently, "pidgin" French being, therefore, out of the question. You cannot think how curious and unexpected it is to hear Africans talking in perfectly good French.

After we had visited all the schools, the boys' as well as the girls', not forgetting the infants', we motored off to the Mission of the White Fathers. Here I was met by the Bishop, who showed me over the Monastery, Church and Mission schools. From there I went to call on the White Sisters, and was shown their wonderful carpet-weaving. This is a remarkable and most lucrative industry. The carpets are beautiful, and I wish I could have bought one, but the smallest would have cost £40. As the wool is spun and woven by hand, the price is really not too high. It is very interesting to watch the way these African women weave the most intricate patterns and designs. All has been taught them by the nuns. The Ougadougou carpets have a world-wide reputation, and justly so, for I must repeat they are quite beautiful.

There was a rather delicious interlude in the midst of my visit when one of the nuns marched her class of very tiny children up to the veranda where I was sitting with the Reverend Mother. These tots varied from four years upwards to seven or eight, and were about sixty in number. The nun formed them into a large circle and they proceeded to sing in excellent French the same old rhymes you and I learnt in our nursery years and years ago, for instance, *Sur le pont d'Avignon, Rataplan, Rataplan*, and *Au clair de la lune*. I was enchanted, it was the most delightful scene and very touching to see these small brown babies, all gathered round the nun, while she stood in the centre and led their songs. I could not help joining in the chorus, and soon Bishop, nuns, children, and officials were all singing nursery rhymes at the tops of

their voices    By this time it was 10 30, and I began to realize I had started my day at 5 30

Our next call was on Madame Michel, where we found the rest of our party sitting about in various stages of exhaustion and heat, but oceans of iced drinks and mountains of delicious little cakes restored our strength and energy, and at eleven we were on our way to the large open square near the War Memorial to watch more curious and varied native dancing

One of the dances, called the "Harvest Dance," is performed with slight variations all over West Africa. The participants, who chant as they dance round and round in a circle, beat time with short wooden staves that produce a strange rhythmic accompaniment. Their costumes are as varied as their steps. Some wear nothing at all, others, elaborate loin-cloths with the tails of leopards or other wild animals fastened on behind. Their heads are decorated with fillets and strings of cowrie shells or beads hanging down in festoons. Next in interest were the "ju-ju" men, who reminded me of a Jack-in-the-green, except that, instead of leaves, they were clothed in grass and what looked like long strands of tow. On their heads they had strange wooden masks, some of a gigantic size, supposed to represent different animals, and symbolizing some illness or peculiarity of the beast. They had no concerted dance, but bounded and careered about separately, whirling round and round, leaping into the air, and then, whether from intention or sheer exhaustion, throwing themselves suddenly on the ground. All the time a wild drumming and beating of tom-toms was keeping up a strange accompaniment, with the loud blowing of horns and the usual so-called musical instruments in addition. There was an endless series of dances, all very much the same with regard to rhythm and noise, but each with its own significance.

Now I must tell you of the real disaster of the day. Being due on the race-course at five o'clock, at 4 30 we assembled on our veranda in our very best and smartest clothes. M. Hesling, with Odette and the rest of the Officials, had just arrived, and we were preparing to start when in the twinkling of an eye we were overwhelmed by the most appalling dust storm I have ever experienced. The dust came down the streets in dense whirling columns, so that we were completely extinguished. It became quite dark, while the wind was howling and rushing round us, and then suddenly the tornado broke—deluges of rain, crashing thunder, and blinding flashes of lightning.

There was a brief pause in the midst of this pandemonium of wind, thunder, rain, and dust. Suddenly there came a crash like the crack of doom, a streak of fire which seemed to come from heaven, and clouds of smoke that blotted out the Residency. Odette gave a shriek, "*Mon Dieu, c'est la maison de Papa, sauvez la petite maman!*" and collapsed into tears. I flew to her assistance, patting her on the back and crying, "*Calmez-vous, chère Mademoiselle, calmez-vous,*" but it was "*la maison de Papa*." That deafening crash had been a thunderbolt and the house was struck by lightning.

The whole party at once streamed across to the Residency, regardless of the rain and their best clothes, I, however, remaining behind, as I felt that my presence would only add to the general confusion. After a short interval H. E. returned, bringing the reassuring news that so far all was well, except that Madame Hesling and Madame Michel had both been knocked down and rather badly burnt.

On my suggesting that we should offer to cancel the official dinner and reception for that evening, H. E. explained that he had already proposed this, but that the heroic Madame Hesling would not hear of it and

## 94    LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST

was determined to carry out the entire programme

Meanwhile the tornado was over, just as suddenly as it had come, but the race meeting was wrecked, and, as we heard afterwards, the whole course was completely flooded, all the ladies soaked to the skin, everything ruined, and, saddest of all, 10,000 natives and 7,000 horsemen who had come in after journeying miles and miles, for days and days, to see us, were disappointed

NOBILI

*May 13*

We are halting here for breakfast on our way home to Navarongo, and I am trying to add a last chapter to my letter from French Territory

Our departure this morning from Ougadougou was attended with the same state and ceremony as that which had greeted our arrival, M Hesling accompanying us to that little clump of stunted trees where we had met and made friends three days previously M Michel, M Albert and M Pouvereau took leave of us here at Nobili

Can you believe that we had to endure another tornado last night, or, more correctly speaking, in the early hours of this morning! I had been in bed for about an hour when it began, and as I was sleeping on the veranda, everything had to be dragged inside at a moment's notice, and not only my bed, but my chair, table, and in fact all that I possessed I stood and surveyed the wreck, very sleepy, very tired, the rain beating in through totally inadequate wooden shutters, and that awful and continuous crash of thunder over my head

It was about three in the morning and I was to be up at five and our loads packed and off before six. It was not worth while to have my bed put up inside,





BOYERS AT LAURA NT



NATIVE WOMEN AT LAURA NT



so I sat, a huddled lump of damp misery, in the centre of that enormous French bed and wondered why I had ever come to West Africa. Alice was full of sympathy, but as she had not established herself on the veranda as I had done, she was safe and dry under her mosquito nets.

I must not omit to tell you of the wonderful conclusion to the events of yesterday. After all the excitement of the thunderbolt and dust storm had subsided, Alice and Decima went out for a drive, while I remained at home, wrote to you and packed. At 7.30 we went to the Residency for dinner, reception and a dance. I assure you it was far from easy to dress for an official evening function by the light of two hurricane lanterns. Malam held one over my head while I endeavoured to do my hair and pin on my orders. However the result, he assured me, was good and that "Big Missis look smart." All honour to Madame Hesling after the alarming events of the afternoon. The arrangements for the reception were perfect and the dinner, superintended by herself and largely prepared by Odette, was excellent.

There were the usual speeches, M. Hesling proposing the health of "The King," which was received with great enthusiasm, followed by that of "The Queen and the Royal Family."

In the middle of dinner we heard the sound of drums and bugles in the far distance, and on my asking what it meant, M. Hesling said it was *La Re traite aux Flambeaux* which was being carried out in our honour. We all hastily left the table and went out on to the veranda. My dear, it was the most marvellous and surprising sight you can imagine. A tattoo at home is beautiful, but here, with the added romance of its strange setting, the beauty of an African night, the wild, barbaric crowds, the splendid and picturesque native troops, the flare of hundreds and

hundreds of torches, the sound of the bugles and the roll of the drums—it was one of the most stirring and impressive scenes imaginable. The entire population took part in this tribute of welcome, to prove their friendship to France's great ally. The tears came to my eyes when the band played "God save the King." Remember I was in the heart of Africa, and home seemed very far away.

To return to our dinner seemed something in the nature of an anti-climax.

Later we danced under the stars, to the light of the moon and torches.

TUMU

(May 14)

Just a few lines to continue my daily story. We reached this camp to-day at noon, having left Navarongo early this morning.

I must tell you of the cruel disappointment that awaited me on my arrival there yesterday from Ougadougou. Do you remember a mail was due when we left on that great expedition, but failed to reach us before our departure? We knew it would and must be there, however, to greet us on our return, and the thought of all the letters from home which were waiting for us helped to make the motor-run of one hundred and more miles pass like magic.

As we drew up at H. E.'s bungalow, I saw the mail bags lying on the veranda and I begged the Private Secretary to open them at once, for he had suggested we should lunch first, but how *could* we stop for food or drink when an unopened mail-bag lay at our feet? I stood breathless with excitement as the seals were broken and the contents of the three bags poured out on to the floor, but there was not one single letter for me. Every one else had a large budget from home.

except myself—not even a bill or a newspaper, just nothing at all! Do you remember that extraordinary play “White Cargo”? It is a cruel libel on the Coast and utterly false and untrue, except in one scene where there is an incident of heart-breaking pathos when the long-expected mail arrives and the old drunken doctor discovers that it has brought him nothing. I felt just like the old doctor as I walked away across the burning space back to my own hut.

None of our lorries having arrived, there was not even a chair for me to sit down on, so I perched disconsolate on the sill of the window and thought and thought over West Africa and the strange desolate feeling of no mail from home. I know that this absence of letters from home has taught me more of what the loneliness of life on the Coast means than anything else, because it has been my own personal experience.

In about half an hour the rest of the party arrived, including all our lorries. Alice forthwith insisted on having a bath, which was really rather awkward, because Captain Puckridge had come over to see that everything was in order and that none of my loads had gone astray, and Alice's bath being put in the middle of her room, through which lay our only way to our front door, he and I were marooned in my part of the veranda. I begged her to hurry, but she was quite happy splashing about until the moment arrived when the Private Secretary called through the window that lunch was ready and H. E. waiting.

What was to be done, with Alice in her bath in the middle of our right-of-way and lunch waiting for us in the other bungalow? We peered out of the window and found it was only about six feet to the ground: so we climbed on to the sill, dropped down, and positively ran across to where we knew food was waiting.

After lunch a great calm came over the whole camp,

and all of us retired to our respective huts and indulged in a well-earned rest

About 4.30, feeling thoroughly refreshed through a two hours' sleep and a large tea, we walked out to the famous crocodile pool, about a mile distant from the camp. The pool abounds with these horrible-looking creatures, but, strange to say, the villagers can go in and out, filling their water-pots, and even bathing, and are neither attacked nor harmed. The explanation of this extraordinary phenomenon is that the crocodile is the "familiar spirit" of man, never being assailed—because if he were injured or killed, the man would suffer a like fate—he also never assails. That, I say, is the explanation given, and the crocodile must be aware of it!

The fact remains that we watched the ladies from the village wandering in and out of the pool quite undisturbed and unafraid, even though they had to push the crocodiles aside. Quite a number of these reptiles lay basking in the sun by the side of the water. We tried to hurry them into the pool by throwing large lumps of dry earth at them, but never managed to hit one, and they merely blinked at us with their evil little eyes.

There is quite a touching little story about a very kindly crocodile, which I must tell you. On one occasion a large family of natives were crossing the Volta with the object of settling in the Via district. They had their old father with them, but left him behind on the other side of the river, thinking him too old to bother about the trouble of getting him across. A crocodile suddenly appeared and very courteously offered to let the poor old man sit on his back while he swam the river. The offer was accepted with gratitude, the father crossed in safety, and in return for this kindly act the crocodile is venerated in the Via district and given immunity from harm.

The scenery during the first part of our journey after leaving Navarongo was the same flat "orchard land" I have described so often—scrub and small trees, little or no shade, and nothing of importance to tell you about. But then, after we left the Fra-fra country and crossed into the Lawra district, which begins at the Sissili River, the scenery underwent a complete change and we found ourselves suddenly in delicious forest land with glorious trees and thick undergrowth. Our passage across the river was somewhat delayed owing to the drift being washed away, and when we arrived we found the District Commissioner, Captain Eyre-Smith, M.C., and about a hundred men busily employed in constructing a rough bridge for our transport to cross. A small breakdown on the road may sometimes be a welcome diversion, and I promptly got out of the motor, and, while the rest of the party worked hard, sat on the bank and made friends with Captain Eyre-Smith's wire-haired terrier, "Tinker" by name.

We are on the fringe of the Kanjaga country, the people of which are unique in these parts by being cannibals. Human sacrifice or cannibalism has never been practised in the Northern Territories by any other tribe, and even the Kanjagas are only modified cannibals, for they do not kill to eat, but consume their relations after natural death only as a pious act. The survivors imagine that in so doing they become possessed of the best qualities of the dead, such as bravery, daring, and so forth. I use the present tense, but we have very rightly discouraged this pious custom, with the result that it is now abandoned. The Kanjagas are said to make excellent soldiers.

Our drift repaired, we proceeded to Tumu, soon leaving our forest land behind us and reverting to the bare open country. We are now in the heart of the big-game district, and the neighbourhood abounds with

leopards, buck of all descriptions, and lions. I am not particularly anxious to meet a lion face to face, but I should like to hear one at a safe distance

My funny little hut, which, by the way, is just big enough to hold Alice and myself with no room to spare, was the scene of a very amusing episode. A little while back a lion chose to inspect it while out on an evening prow, and so disturbed its occupant that he spent the remainder of the night sitting on the roof. I am wondering whether we shall have a similar experience.

We have just returned from the Palaver, which was followed by native dancing and some very amusing races. These wild men ride magnificently. The small boys had a tremendous success with their donkey race, riding bare-backed, and no whips or sticks allowed. The race was both exciting and peculiar. One very interesting item on the programme was a tug-of-war. Captain Eyre-Smith had trained the men for this—to them—very novel form of sport. It was remarkable to notice the way in which these primitive people responded to discipline and displayed a very clear idea of “playing the game.”

My letters are always brought to an abrupt close through the light failing. I will try to write more from Lawra, which we reach to-morrow.

LAWRA.

*May 17*

This is the most perfect place and I am enjoying every moment of my stay here. To begin with, the weather is too gorgeous. Burning hot sun, it is true, but what does that matter when one is as happy as we are! The only little cloud is that my dear Alice is suffering from a slight touch of the sun and a little rise of temperature, which entails complete rest for her. She

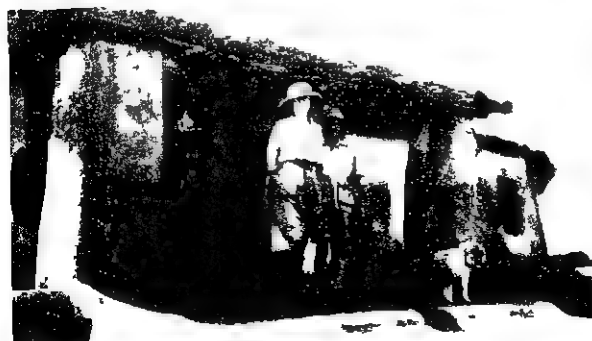




M. L. LUTTON



VIEW FROM RISE HOUSE, LUTTON



M. L. C. TYRL SMITH AND JINKIE, LUTTON



feels rather like a prisoner, as she may not even go across to H E's bungalow for meals, and so is left in charge of the sentry and our two orderlies. Her own "boy" is an excellent nurse, and it is really very touching the way he looks after her. He refused to go to the Palaver or watch the dancing and races, being unwilling to leave "Small Missis" when she was ill.

But I am forgetting to tell you of our thrilling arrival. The reception at Tumu was weird, noisy and strange to a degree, but might have been a mothers' meeting compared with that which awaited us here. About four miles outside the village the fun began. The road was lined on both sides with gunmen wearing short loose tunics. Some had bare legs, others wore rather baggy trousers made out of native cloth. Their head-dress consisted of hats or caps made of skins with the animal's tail hanging down behind, similar to the *voyageur* or trapper in Canada, and elaborate cartridge-belts completed their costume. They kept up a continuous salute, firing alternately in the air and from side to side across the road we had to pass over. It was an awful row and grew to be absolutely deafening as we proceeded and the crowds increased.

After the gunmen had done their worst as regards noise, it became the turn of the spearmen and bowmen to show what they could do. These gentlemen were of an alarming appearance. The spearmen wear just loin-cloths made of strings of cowrie shells, and a skin slung round the neck covering the man's back and left side, reaching half-way down his leg, which sometimes is ornamented with round pieces of different coloured leather. They mostly wear a tight-fitting cap, also of leather, sewn with cowrie shells and surmounted by the horns of a buck or an ox, but, needless to say, there is great variety of fashion in their headgear, some having just a calabash smeared with white mud. The wearers of these, I learnt afterwards, belong to the

**Lobi tribe** A very smart hat is one made of small fluffy leathers, ornamented by one large quill standing straight up at the back of the head, worn only on very rare occasions

The bowmen were naked, save for a leather belt stitched with cowrie shells and a long thin fringe of leather reaching half-way to the knee. Round their necks they wore an assortment of necklaces of plaited cords or strings of leather, from which hung strange pieces of bone, horns of buck, and other such trifles. Their armlets are rather interesting - on the right arm one of leather, again sewn with cowrie shells, sometimes five rows deep, and on the left one, also of leather, decorated with a tuft of elephant hair and round the wrist a small stuffed skin to prevent the cane string of the bow from cutting it, rather like that worn by our English archers of olden days. The bow is made of bamboo measuring about four feet or more, their quivers are covered with beautiful fine strips of leather, white and red, and woven into all sorts of fancy patterns, and these they sling over one shoulder.

The spearmen's and bowmen's share in the entertainment consisted, of course, of yelling, and thus adding to the general tumult. They closed in round the motor, one section brandishing their spears within an inch of our faces, while the bowmen shot their arrows, which they had very considerably protected with barbs. In old days these were dipped in poison, and I believe are still. The women added to the general confusion of sound by uttering their peculiar piercing cry, which seemed to outdo even the persistent blowing of horns and beating of drums.

Into this human whirlpool we descended, and in a moment I was completely obliterated from view by hundreds of yelling wild men shaking their spears, pointing their arrows at me, and at the same time making the most awful and terrifying faces. I simply

could not move and had to remain quite still enduring this extraordinary form of welcome. At length I was extricated and enabled to rejoin the rest of the party, who each in their turn were trying to disentangle themselves from the mob. All rather heated and flushed, we assured each other how much we had enjoyed it, I quite truthfully, as it was so strange and primitive.

I am told that the tradition and practice of this weird reception have gone on for centuries. There is an old book, published in 1819, containing the personal narrative of Edward Bowdich, who was at the head of a commission sent up from Cape Coast Castle into the interior. The description he gives of one of his receptions by the natives is identically the same as that which we experienced on Friday, with this exception, that in Bowdich's day many of the chiefs' retainers carried the bleached skulls of former victims, each being "adorned" with bunches of thyme ("to keep the spirits from troubling the king"), and they added to the general babel of noise by beating on these skulls with their knives.

At last we reached our quarters and were quite thankful to do so. This time my hut is very spacious. I might almost describe it as luxurious, since I boast of a sitting-room, the veranda ending in a large kiosk-shaped space at the end near the entrance. In front stand two enormous flamboyant trees, guarding the house like sentries. I have masses of swallows as fellow-lodgers. They were in a fearful turmoil and state of fright when I arrived, but have now become accustomed to me, and fly in and out all day quite happily and undisturbed, or sit on the cross-beams and twitter and sing without stopping. They strike me as much bigger than those we see in Europe, and their plumage is richer, the blue-black of their feathers more intense. I shall miss these cheerful little coin-

panions when we move on, but I care less for the company of bats, who also make this **their** home, and would willingly dispense with them.

No, we met no lions at Tumu. Just my luck—I never even heard one—and here we have been three days and not a sound but the song of the birds. This is all the more provoking, as in the early morning of our arrival an unfortunate woman had been carried off by a lion out of this very village. She is supposed to have been dragged into the bush and eaten, as nothing has been seen or heard of her since.

I had planned to ride yesterday morning, but all our "boys" overslept themselves, and when they did turn up it was too late, as H E was holding a Palaver at 7.30, which I had to attend.

The Palaver was a beautiful sight. All the Chiefs were accompanied by enormous retinues including their horsemen as well as their gunmen, spearmen and bowmen, assembled in a vast semicircle facing a small grass-thatched pavilion that had been put up for us. The Chiefs and their sub-chiefs sat on wonderful leather cushions before us, the rest of the company kneeling or squatting on the ground, and the warriors standing like a solid human wall in the background.

The procedure at these Palavers is always the same. We, as strangers, brought the first greeting, and then the Chiefs, according to rank and seniority, paid the return visit. After this H E delivered his speech, in which he referred to the various questions affecting the district, the chief subjects being road-making and the cultivation of the shea-butter tree.

Here I think you ought to submit to a little instruction regarding the shea-butter tree. It is of great importance both for food and trading purposes. Do you remember anything about Munjo Park, one of the earliest, and in his day most famous, explorers, who lived in the late eighteenth, and early nineteenth, century?



ON THE BANKS OF THE VOLTA BURIO N I





Well, he travelled for the African Society of London, and in the course of his voyages on the West Coast of Africa, came across this tree and called it after himself with a long Latin name, which I do not remember. Shea butter flourishes in the dry parts of West Africa, replacing the oil palm, which requires an enormous amount of moisture, and therefore cannot grow in these more arid districts. The natives use the vegetable fat as food, while we in this country use it for making soap and candles. Experiments are being made to see whether it can be preserved and exported as a substitute for butter, the fatty substance remaining good for quite a time even without the addition of salt. This is so, at least, according to Mungo Park.

The trees vary in growth, some reach the height of sixty feet, while others resemble a very large and luxurious thorn tree. The wood is hard and heavy, and the bark reminds me of an elephant's hide, which makes it easy to distinguish it from other trees. The blossom is rather pretty, white with a sweet smell, and grows always at the tips of the branches, the nut itself is the size of an ordinary plum, and has a green pulpy husk rather like a walnut. The natives enormously enjoy eating them, and our "boys" have constantly offered me some as light refreshment during our halts by the wayside. When the fruit is ripe, it falls from the tree and is collected and kept in pits till all the pulp has rotted away, leaving the kernel or actual nut, and this is then used for trading purposes. Its great value would be for cattle food, that is, oil-cake, but it has a slightly bitter flavour which the European cattle don't fancy, and the process of eliminating this bitterness is as yet very costly.

But to return to the Governor's speech.

H. E. always concludes by making a charming allusion to my presence and to the fact of my being the

King's cousin (which has generally to be interpreted as "sister," that being an easier relationship to understand) He tells them also that I am a grandchild of Queen Victoria, which always causes immense interest It is wonderful how her memory is still cherished and honoured and her name handed down to the younger generation by the older men, who remember well the day they came under British rule in 1897

I must tell you of a little incident that occurred when H E inspected the ex-service men just before the Palaver took place I suddenly detected an old veteran amongst them who was wearing Grand-mamma's Jubilee Medal I at once asked Captain Eyre-Smith how and why he had got it He proved to be an old soldier who had come over to England as one of the deputation of the Gold Coast Regiment for the Diamond Jubilee I had quite a long talk with him, though most of our conversation had to be carried on through an interpreter His medal ribbon was the original one he had received in 1897, and, as you can imagine, it was very stained and faded I have promised to send him a new piece as soon as I return home I warned him he might have to wait a long time till it reached him, but this did not disturb him in the slightest degree, and Captain Eyre-Smith assured me that the man would be willing to wait years for it, in perfect confidence that "The Great White Queen's grandchild" would not forget her promise<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On my return to England I sent the piece of Jubilee Medal ribbon to Captain Eyre-Smith requesting him to hand it to the ex-service man I have received the following letter in reply

LAWRA,  
NORTHERN TERRITORIES

*Dec 2, 1925*

MADAM,

You have no idea how pleased and gratified I was to receive your very kind letter It acted as a splendid tonic to one's loneliness, and it is so nice to think one's efforts were appreciated

## LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST 107

Most of the older men were Hausas and had the 1895 Ashanti Star. They were all so proud when I remarked on it and told them that my brother had gained the same decoration.

My part in the proceedings of a Palaver is to thank the Chiefs for their welcome to me and to offer to take back a message of homage and loyalty to their King.

When all the speechifying is over, the Chiefs come forward again, followed by their attendants bearing the gifts they have prepared for our acceptance, which we spread out at our feet. These are leopard-skins, beautiful leather cushions, bags with long fringes, baskets, some of which are decorated with cowrie shells, head-dresses, and of course sheep, fowls and cattle and eggs and yams. Everything is accepted except the livestock, which is always returned to the kind donors, for otherwise we should have by now vast

It was also extremely kind of you, Madam, to remember the medal ribbon for the ex-soldier Bassana Grunshu. I presented the ribbon at a special meeting of chiefs. Bassana and the chiefs were most delighted and surprised to find that the "Granddaughter of the Great White Queen had remembered one of their countrymen on her return to her country," and needless to say Bassana was very proud he had been picked out for this special attention.

It is very kind of you to retain such pleasant memories of my district, and the chiefs and I will always look back with the happiest recollections on the honour you bestowed on the district in being the first member of the Royal Family to visit this very out of the way corner of the Empire.

There is, however, just one thing we all very much regretted, and that is that we were able to do so little for your personal comfort. The chiefs did what they could with their scanty material and lack of intelligent assistance, and they are happy to think you should honour them by writing to their Commissioner.

I shall be most honoured, Madam, to avail myself of your kind invitation to call on you when next on leave.

I have the honour to be, Madam,

Your most humble and obedient servant,

SR J EYRE-SMITH,

D C

## 108 LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST

herds and flocks following in the wake of our triumphal procession

I was presented with a belt of cowrie shells such as is worn only by people of the highest rank

Our "dash" in return takes the practical form of money

In the afternoon we were present at the most curious race meeting I have ever attended. Prominent among the crowd were the picturesque Chiefs in rich flowing robes, accompanied by hordes of Lobi warriors, whose sole idea of being really smart consists in drawing patterns on their bodies in white mud, so that in the distance they look rather like skeletons with spats on. Then there were large bands of horsemen, of whom, even at the risk of boring you with too much detail, I must tell you. They sat perched up on high saddles, which are covered with white cloth, the tail pommel in front being decorated with patches of colour. The horse itself is almost concealed by the most elaborate trappings—leopard-skins edged with leather of every possible shade, a sort of patchwork of small squares of metal, and long fringes hanging almost to the ground. The back of the horse from the edge of the saddle to the tip of his tail is also covered with a leopard-skin. Masses of charms, including curious bells and small pieces of metal attached to bits of red and green material, hang round the horse's neck, while his face is partially covered by a complicated harness of metal and leather, known as the "chakasabra." In addition they have a leather frontlet covered with bells, while the brow-band, or "chikkasara," is an arrangement of plaques which hang down like a fringe on each side. The bridles are made of plaited leather.

The rider himself wears robes of linen woven and dyed locally. The dye is always native indigo and a most beautiful metallic blue-black. His garments, which are very simple, are fixed at the waist by a belt

composed of cords of red wool ending in enormous tassels, rather like early Victorian bell-ropes. His head-dress is made from folds of dark indigo-coloured material twisted turban-like and brought over the face. It covers the mouth and jaw, and is surmounted by a large round straw hat with a peaked crown. The boots are of a most gaudy appearance, red or yellow, with a variety of intricate patterns on them of different colours. Some reach half-way up to the hip, others are cut away at the back of the knee and go right up to the waist, where they are fastened on to a belt by two loops. These men are armed to the teeth. First and foremost they carry a six-foot spear, also a long straight sword which has a cross hilt like a Crusader's. There is also a shorter sword, and the scabbards of both are made of richly worked leather.

Each horseman has his own "boy," who runs alongside, wearing the ordinary native cloth and a peaked hat.

The West African is generally clean-shaven, head and face alike, though here and there you meet a man with a "Newgate fringe," especially among the horseboys, and sometimes one who has left little odd tufts of hair on his otherwise bare skull. Many of the women shave their heads, and even the babies and tiny children have quaint patterns cut in their woolly scalps.

The ladies must have gone to great expense for the occasion, for they were extravagantly attired in bunches of freshly gathered leaves. Sometimes they neglect to renew their dresses and their leafy costumes present a very bedraggled appearance, but to-day, in honour of this great gathering, they had apparently stripped all the available bushes in the neighbourhood to provide themselves with Ascot toilettes. Even so, no one could honestly accuse them of being over-dressed.

Major Walker-Leigh tells me that when he was District Commissioner here at Lawra, he was very proud of the hibiscus hedge round his bungalow.

This hedge he tended and cherished with great care, but the ladies of the village regarded it as their shopping centre, and their visits became so frequent that, in order to protect the hedge from complete destruction, he had to post a sentry to protect it.

Our arrival on the course was heralded by an outburst of native music. In addition to the ordinary tom-toms and horns, they had a medley of stringed instruments, one of which resembled a Tyrolese zither, made entirely of cane, including the strings (I have been "dashed" with one). Then there was a curious little three-stringed instrument rather like a badly shaped cricket bat, a huge *glockenspiel* with wooden keys, very similar to those I heard at the "Pwés"<sup>1</sup> in Burma, and the drums are of such a wonderful variety, large and small, tall and thin, short and squat, that, were I to begin to describe them in detail, I should never finish.

We took up our position in front of what might be called the Royal Stand, a small square pavilion raised about two feet from the ground, with the inevitable grass roof, and when all was ready, the signal was given for the first race to start. In the distance we observed a cloud of dust which seemed to be bearing down upon us with alarming rapidity, and it gradually dawned upon us that the race was making for the Royal Stand. The riders had but one thought in their minds, to reach the winning-post, and any small obstacle that happened to come in their way, such as the Governor and his party, was a mere nothing and unworthy of notice. We rose from our seats with more speed than dignity, and sought safety and shelter on the little dais not a moment too soon, for the race thundered past on both sides of our refuge, scattering our chairs in a cloud of dust. The second race followed so swiftly on the first one that Captain Eyre-Smith,

<sup>1</sup> A Burmese word for festival



WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN THE COMPOUND



WOMEN PREPARING FOOD IN THE COMPOUND



VIEW OF THE CHIEF OF JIKASA'S COMPOUND





who was busy at the starting-point, had no time to realize what was happening. Messengers were, however, sent flying from every direction to tell him of our peril, with the result that, in order to keep the course, the entire crowd was allowed to surge forward, which certainly saved us from being ridden down, but slightly impaired our view of the proceedings. The rest of the afternoon passed without any further alarming incident.

This morning Captain Eyre-Smith, Captain Puckridge and I started out on an expedition to the Volta to shoot hippos. We left at 5.30, motored about six miles out of the town, and then mounted our ponies and rode off to Burifo, a small rest-compound on a ridge overlooking the valley. Such a marvellous view! Imagine low scrub and rocks in the foreground, leading down to a valley, with a thick belt of trees like an emerald ribbon threaded through the landscape, behind which lies the river, then more rolling country, and, on the far horizon, a range of hills, the Tong mountains. Oh, I can never tell you the joy and beauty of that early morning! The sun was just rising, everything was bathed in a soft rosy light, each blade of grass, each tiny leaf glistening with dew-drops as if powdered with millions of diamonds, the air was pure and fresh and full of delicious scents, deep mauve shadows lay on the mountains, and, as the sun rose higher in the heavens, all seemed slowly to turn to gold. How can I ever help you to see what I saw, and shall ever see when I hear the word Burifo!

On reaching the rest-house we dismounted and guided our ponies down over the rocks, then scrambled on to their backs again and rode across the valley towards the Volta. There we left our ponies in the shade of a tree and cautiously advanced to the river's edge. The Chief of the District had posted watchers all along the bank during the night to report the move-

## 112 LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST

ments of the hippos (the river is full of them), and word had been brought in to Captain Eyre-Smith on our arrival at the rest-house that three had been sighted between the hours of five and six, so, as it was not yet seven, there was every possibility of them being still about. We held our breath and scarcely dared speak above a whisper as we peered through the bush down on to the river below. I cannot describe the thrill and excitement of the moment. I quite expected to see dozens of ungainly hippo heads inviting us to shoot them, but I had a cruel disappointment, for as placid and unruffled as the surface of a lily pond at home did the Volta lie beneath our gaze. Our hunters, and the strange followers that had seemed to spring up from nowhere, were equally bewildered and angered at the failure of their carefully planned hunting expedition. It was all so intensely beautiful that, to be quite truthful, I really did not mind the hippos' absence, but I was bitterly grieved for Captain Eyre-Smith, who had been so keen for me to shoot one. However, as you know, my dear, I never should have hit it even had it been there, so it need not have settled at the bottom of the river for safety. Eventually some one cried out that they saw a crocodile, and there was fierce excitement, both Captain Eyre-Smith and Captain Puckridge blazing away at it, but the croc flopped unharmed into the water and was seen no more.

By now it was nearly nine o'clock and we began to talk more of breakfast than of shooting hippos, so we mounted our ponies and rode back to Burifo. Here Captain Eyre-Smith had most carefully prepared everything for my comfort, and, after a wash, we sat down to breakfast. What a wonderful meal it was! Such eggs and bacon, such coffee out of a blue enamelled pot, such delicious fresh bread and masses of marmalade! True, we chased the butter round the dish with a spoon, and Captain Puckridge ate the remaining

Three eggs while we were waiting for a fresh supply, which, alas was not forthcoming but what did that matter, when it was all such glorious fun! It was just Burifo, and the most gorgeous morning that had ever dawned

When our hunger was appeased we pulled our chairs out on to the veranda and sat and talked of home and Africa, but, alas, the sad moment came all too soon for us to bid farewell to Burito and its joys, and reluctantly we turned our faces homewards. It was eleven o'clock, the sun high up over our heads, and the heat terrific, and I had quite forgotten my spine-pad, finding it difficult to remember in the cool of the early morning that one may be trizzling and sizzling, and even running the risk of sunstroke in a few hours' time. As a spine-pad was necessary, there was nothing to do but to improvise one out of napkins, which I folded into a thick wad and tucked into the collar of my shirt. We trekked slowly home and got in just in time to change for lunch

\* \* \* \* \*

6 p m

The light is beginning to fail but it is such a wonderful evening that I am loth to call Malam to bring in my lanterns, for fear that even their very modest amount of light should break the spell of this magic moment. The stars are just beginning to appear, do you know why they cannot shine in the daytime? I will tell you the reason: the stars are the children of the sun and the moon, and a long time ago, a terrible family upheaval took place and the parents decided to destroy them all. The sun began to carry out his intention, but the moon watched the proceeding with ever-increasing anxiety, and, finally, became frantic as one lovely star-child after another disappeared from the heavens. The sun, having completed his share of

## 114 LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST

the massacre, came to the moon and told her it was now her turn to slay the rest of the children, but this she positively refused to do, and declared that nothing would ever persuade her to sacrifice even the tiniest star, and that no matter how tiresome or how trying they were she intended to keep them all. This she did, and now you will understand why the poor sun has no one to play with and has to spend the whole day alone, while gentle kindly mother moon, on the other hand, has all her myriads of star-children round her, twinkling with laughter and joy all through the night.

There is a rather quaint legend about the sky and the reason why it is so far away. Hundreds and hundreds of years ago the sky dwelt quite close to the earth and they were on very happy terms with one another, until one day the sky became very angry. It was all the fault of an old woman, who lost her temper with him while preparing yams for dinner. Perhaps the sky got in the way or interfered with her cooking arrangements—at any rate, the old woman struck him repeatedly with her pestle and tried to drive him away, and he went off in a huff and has never come back.

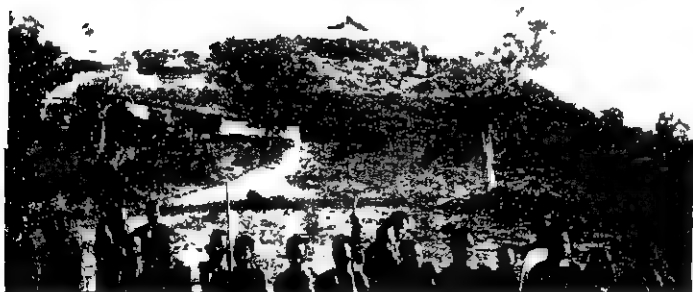
Another version of this legend tells much the same *story of the interfering habits of the sky when it lived close to the earth*. According to this account, the old woman became so angry with it for constantly getting in her way when cooking that she cut off a piece of the sky and made it up into soup. The sky naturally resented this rude and painful treatment, and retired to its present position, never to return.

Yet another explanation of the sky's remoteness is this one.

A man and a woman had a tiny child to whom they were deeply attached, but a python came along and swallowed the little fellow. The parents, as you can



NAIVE WOMEN AT JIRAPA N I



RESI-HOUSE AT JIRAPA N I



imagine, were in terrible distress, and they appealed for help to the spirits. Four strangers appeared—one was skilled in tracking, the second in killing, the third offered to skin the python, while the last one said he was able to restore life. All four were successful—the python was tracked, killed, skinned, and the child restored to life and given back to the parents. Then a quarrel arose among the strangers as to who should possess the skin. The dispute became so bitter that the parents did not dare decide on the disposal of the prize, but called in the child to settle the question. He said that the skin should be tossed into the air, and that the man upon whom it fell should possess it. They accordingly threw it up, but it never came down to earth again, but remained to form the sky and the heavenly bodies. The head of the python became the sun, the tail grew into the moon, and the spots upon its skin the stars.

It is quite a mistake to think that these pagans have no belief in a Supreme Being—shadowy and vague though their idea about Him may be, they all in some form or other acknowledge the existence of a Creator of life and Controller of destiny. His power, though they cannot define it, is absolute. He has been given no visible form, nor may He be approached by mortal man. Apparently He dwells somewhere in the sky itself, or near the sun—this is curious, because the sun is of little importance to them. He is supposed to travel by night over the same road he journeyed by day, and when, sometimes, the moon loses her way and gets across his path, he begins to eat her—this is the favourite explanation of an eclipse—and the people then beg him to let her go, clapping their hands to attract his attention to their petition.

I am much amused to find that the custom and superstition of paying deference to the new moon is as prevalent here as it is in civilized countries. I don't

## 116 LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST

mean to say that they curtsy or kiss their hands to her as we do , but they take a little wood-ash, put it in the palm of their hand, and blow it towards the thread-like crescent, saying " I saw you before you saw me " This is to prevent their strength decreasing as the moon increases in size

One more legend before I close It tells you how death came into the world In the olden days, long, long ago, God was in very close communion with His earthly children, and when He considered that either a man or a woman had spent sufficient time on earth, He used to send a friendly messenger and bid them come and dwell with Him in the sky One day the summons came to a man who refused to pay any heed to it, his reason for this surprising act of disobedience being that he preferred his wives, his cattle and his riches, to God Another messenger was promptly sent with a very stern order to leave the earth at once , but the man again refused This messenger, in despair, sent back an urgent appeal for help, and God commanded Death, accompanied by Disease, to carry him away The man did not dare disobey such powerful messengers, and ever since that day God has always sent Death and Disease to fetch His children to the sky

How I long to have a quiet time in which to learn and understand these fascinating traditions and legends, which form such an important part of the life of the country , but, alas, I am only a bird of passage amongst these primitive folk, and, " A people is like a load containing many things—you cannot perceive the contents in a single day " <sup>1</sup>

Night has come, and mother moon is sailing serenely through the heavens, surrounded by her vast and beautiful family This is her signal for me to say good night

<sup>1</sup> Ashanti proverb



## LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST 117

WA

May 18

We have left beautiful Lawra, and my hut with its gorgeous flamboyants and its friendly swallows is a thing of the past, only a wonderful memory remains to me of all those indescribably happy hours spent there. Our departure was timed for seven o'clock, and we arranged to breakfast *en route* at Jirapa, about one hour distant. Alice, who is, I am thankful to say, really better, left at 5.30 with the Doctor, it having been considered wiser for her to go straight through without a break to Wa in the cool of the early morning, and thus to avoid motoring in the blazing sun.

Our way lay past Burifo, the scene of our glorious picnic, and here as we turned away from the rest-house the "Hausa farewell" was sounded, the echoes of it following us on our way and bidding us God-speed on the journey. How can I ever attempt to describe to you that bugle-call! Beautiful, pathetic, stirring, I felt it was indeed my farewell to Lawra.

At last we reached the foot of a small and very steep hill, at the top of which was the rest-house, and, as we fondly hoped, our breakfast. We were met by Captain Doherty, who always goes on ahead to make all the necessary preparations, with the awful news that the breakfast lorry had failed to turn up, there must have been a mistake in the orders and it had probably gone on to the next rest-house, about fifteen miles distant. Of one thing he was certain—that there was no breakfast. Despair and hunger showed itself on every face, while I remarked with irritating cheerfulness, "Never mind, we shall find it in time." But although optimism is a valuable gift to possess, it does not still the pangs of hunger. While we were wondering where that wretched lorry could be and what was the best thing to do, the Chief of Jirapa arrived, with

## 118 LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST

all his retinue Our sad plight was explained to him, and also the reason why H E and his whole party were sitting by the roadside, and, with the most perfect courtesy, the Chief invited us into his compound to rest there, while messengers were dispatched to find our elusive breakfast

"It's an ill wind," etc, and we thus had an opportunity of penetrating into his compound, which resembled a walled city more than an ordinary dwelling All his hundreds of wives, children, servants and retainers live within its walls We climbed in by means of a perilous sort of ladder, really only the trunk of a tree with notches cut in the wood, just large enough to hold the tip of your foot I hauled myself up, and on arriving at the top of the wall found a most surprising scene I seemed to be looking over a series of terraces, which, however, were the flat roofs of the houses, and on which, apparently, most of the domestic life of the community takes place Some women were busy cooking and making little round cakes that looked like hundreds of tiny white cannon balls (some are baked in the sun), others were washing, and others again stirring savoury messes in large pots over small wood fires, the children were playing in the sunlight, and there was an atmosphere of peace and contentment over all The Chief led me into his own quarters, which consisted of a court-house where he administers justice to his tribe, a guest-house to accommodate stray travellers, granaries and innumerable store-houses, and his own private living-rooms, all, of course, made out of "swish," but scrupulously clean and airy I was thrilled at everything I saw, especially the little strange bits of ju-ju or fetish in the corners of some of the rooms these were of a very simple description—a few feathers and bits of wood or bone, no doubt a tidy housemaid at home would have cleared them away as terrible rubbish, but they are as precious

## LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST 119

to Jirapa as an Ikon is to a devout Russian peasant. Do you remember Kipling's lines in his "Hymn before Action," regarding the strange and alien faiths of other races

" For those who kneel beside us  
At altars not Thine own,  
Who lack the lights that guide us,  
Lord, let their faith atone "

We climbed up more tree trunks on to the roof of the house, and from there got a very accurate impression of the plan on which the compound is laid out. But all this time we were longing for breakfast, and at last some kind soul suggested to H E. that it might be as well if we continued our quest. Climbing down the trunks was even more difficult than climbing up, but at last I slithered on to solid ground, and then watched with interest the rest of the party do likewise. It was not a graceful sight.

After many cordial farewells we returned to our motors and pursued our hungry way to the next rest-house, only to meet there with fresh disappointment. This meant that we must go as far as Sabule (another twenty miles), before we should find any food, and I cannot tell you how excited we all became when, on sighting this next rest-house, we also sighted the longed-for lorry. Much bacon and many eggs restored our energies, and after a short rest we continued on our way to Wa.

Wa is an interesting as well as an important place. The District Commissioner, Colonel Whithall, met us on our arrival, and to my joy I saw Alice waving to me from the balcony of my bungalow. Our reception was marvellous, and more orderly than at Lawra, though quite as noisy, a great feature being the very large number of mounted Chiefs and other horsemen. We greeted them all, but held no Palaver, that function being reserved for this morning, there was, however, a

most imposing march past of the whole assembly. The gunmen and spearmen introduced quite a new feature into the proceedings by singing their beautiful marching songs. One of the gunmen's songs related to our visit. "When the lion kills meat, it is good for the vultures." This means that, as the Governor had come to their town, much meat was killed and there was feasting. H E is the lion and the crowd who feast are the vultures. The men have really magnificent deep voices and preserve an extraordinary rhythm in their chanting. I am trying to get some of the music; it will not be easy, as it will have to be taken down by ear, as the men march by.

A terrific tornado broke just as the parade was over, but mercifully it did not last long, and I have been able to get a ride before sunset. Colonel Whithall produced the most enchanting pony for me, half the size of nothing at all, but famous throughout the district for its achievements on the race-course. It really was the tiniest object I have ever seen, and an ordinary pony's bridle was too big for it, so part of it had to be fixed up with string. This absurd animal looked like a lamb, but I soon found out my mistake, when I tried to mount, no sooner had I got my foot into the stirrup than it backed away sideways like a crab, and I hopped after it on one foot, while it curved and sidled and danced the figure 8, performing every conceivable antic, but never for one moment standing still. I became very heated with hopping about, and painfully aware that I must be looking supremely ridiculous, but at last, by some miracle, I found myself in the saddle. We were both much surprised, but I think the pony recovered first, because it forthwith arched its back like a cat and proceeded bucking down the road. Colonel Whithall was quite unnecessarily urging me to ride well ahead, as he informed me it was inclined to bite if any other animal came alongside.



TAIYU LI AI WA N I



JU-JU MEN AI WA



I attempted a trot, and here the pony took complete control of the situation and I found myself being trotted away into the midst of the native village, scattering the people from side to side and sadly interfering with their marketing. When at last it did halt, I had no false shame in demanding another pony. This ride had not been intended as an equestrian exhibition on my part, but a pleasant stroll on the top of a pony in the cool of the evening, at the end of a long day's trek, so I dismounted and took Captain Puckridge's in exchange, and had the pleasure of seeing that he could not manage this diminutive beast any better than I could.

We paid a visit to the Na of Wa, a very important Chief, his compound was quite different from Jirapa's, for though it also was enclosed with high walls, there were no trees by which to climb up. Inside it was like a maze, innumerable little passages and galleries connecting the various huts, and so confusing me that I was continually losing my way and being fetched back on to the right path by the Na. After our visit was ended, we rode off to inspect the Government farm and nursery gardens, and now I am resting and spending the quiet hour before dinner writing to you.

I began my letter by saying that Wa is really of great interest, and I assume that you will wish to hear something about its history. There are four big tribes in the district: Walas, Dagatis, Lobis (whom we saw at Lawra), and Grunshis, whom we met at Navarongo and Tumu. The Walas are of course, the most important, they migrated here about two hundred years ago from the Dagomba country. In addition to these, there is a very large Mohammedan community, that settled here about the same time as the Walas, which came from what is now known as the hinterland of Sierra Leone. No one seems to know why these two races should have simultaneously fixed on Wa as their colony.

There were two distinct migrations one from the west and one from the east, one pagan, the other Moham-medan ; but each apparently determined to settle in the same country The obvious explanation is that in their wanderings they had both discovered that the Wa district was a fertile land, where water was abundant and their cattle and flocks could thrive

The original founder of the chieftainship of the Walas was Gura , he came from Yendi, and the present Na or Chief is the twenty-fifth of that line in direct descent

There are rather curious ceremonies connected with the election of the Chief of Wa After the burial of any Chief, one of his uncles temporarily takes over his office and assumes the title of " Tandaga Na " When all the late Chief's kinsmen have assembled with drums and gunmen, the Chief Mallam of the Mohammedans and the Tindanas formally announce his demise and call on the family to appoint his successor (The Tindanas are the Priests of the Land God and are of very great importance and influence throughout the whole country )

The chiefs and sub-chiefs and all the heads of the family are allowed a day to make their choice , this is to give time to secure a strong following for the one who is claiming the Head Chieftainship Should a dispute arise between two parties, the Tindanas and the Chief Mallam act as the judges, awarding the Chieftainship probably to a branch other than that of the previous holder, providing always that there is sufficient support to justify their decision , and when the selection has been made, every one returns to their own house until the following Friday

On reassembling, the Chief-Designate gives a money " dash " to the Mallam and the Tindanas, to pay for their prayers He then shaves his head, and sends a new white hat and a white robe to the Master of the



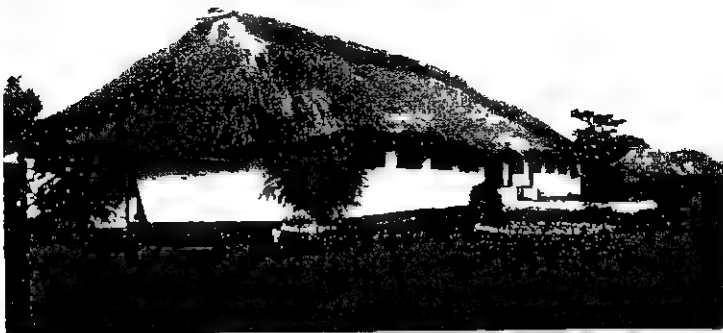
Ceremonies, which the latter brings back after some hours in a basket, with a cow-hide, which he spreads before the Chief's house in the centre of the crowd. The Chief-Designate is then called, and seats himself on the cow-hide, while the Master of the Ceremonies informs him that the whole country is being entrusted to him on that day. He then pretends to robe the Chief, and repeats the attempt a second time, but it is only at the third repetition that he actually robes him and places the hat on his head. With much drumming and dancing the new Chief is ceremoniously escorted to another house, where he remains for a further seven days and is then conducted to the Chief's house, which become his residence for life. After a lapse of six months the final ceremony takes place. The Chief invites all the elders to a great feast, for which he has to provide three head of cattle, the largest being killed just outside his house, while the two others are distributed among the crowd. The Chief must walk, climb or jump over the carcass of the ox, after which, resuming his seat outside his house, he announces to the drum-men his name as Chief. Then all his relatives salute him and offer a varied collection of presents, including wives and money. The name of the present Chief, or Na, of Wa is Peripo III, which means "Pure Heart."

This district is not thickly populated, owing to the terrible slave-raiding of Samori and Barbetu. These raids are still a very vivid and terrible experience in the memory of many of the older people, who served in their youth as slaves in distant parts of Africa, and have only in recent years found their way back to their own land.

Samori was a Mohammedan with a large following of fanatical co-religionists, who came originally from the hinterland of Sierra Leone and swept across all this part of the Northern Territories. His force

consisted of between 45,000 and 50,000 horsemen, all of whom were well equipped and provided with arms and ammunition. He does not appear to have been actively hostile to the European, whom he regarded as his superior in every way, but when called upon by Prempeh of Ashanti to help him, he refused, excusing himself on the plea that the latter was a pagan. The English first occupied Wa in 1897, when we took over the Northern Territories, and Samori at that time was at the height of his activities. Needless to say we soon found ourselves compelled to fight him. Wa was defended by three Englishmen, Lieutenant Henderson, late R N, Captain Irvine and Dr Part, and a young educated African, Ferguson by name, they held the little fort against terrible odds, but when water ran short they were compelled to evacuate it. I believe Ferguson, who had often treated with the chiefs, lost his life while trying to arrange an armistice. We reoccupied Wa the following year, and rebuilt the fort, and this time we appear to have been more successful in putting an end to Samori's raids in this part of the country. Samori himself was eventually captured by the French in the hinterland of the Ivory Coast.

Barbetu was one of eight Bazerberimis who settled among the Dagombas in 1860. About this time the Ashantis and Dagombas were at war, and the latter, having been defeated, were forced to pay an indemnity of 2,000 slaves. In order to obtain these slaves, they raided the Grunshis, assisted by the Bazerberimis and their followers, and though the raid failed in its purpose, the Bazerberimis remained in the Grunshi country as mercenaries, fighting first for one chief and then for another, under the leadership of Barbetu, who became a terror in the land. He made his headquarters at Kasana, about nine miles N E of Tumu, and established there a large slave-market, to which



MY QUARTERS AT LOFT NT



DECORATING A CHIEF AT THE PALACE AT BOLE NT



desert traders came from all parts to buy slaves, many of these unfortunate victims were transported as far as Egypt and Morocco. One of the chiefs presented to me at Tumu, Badua by name, had been one of Barbetu's Bazerberimis, he is now a reformed character, but it gave me a curious sensation to realize that twenty years ago, or even less, this man had been actually slave-raiding.

Barbetu was never so important a figure as Samori, nor did he command such a large force, but the work of devastation carried out by him was very complete, and it is piteous to see the ruins of what were once flourishing compounds and villages. He carried off the flower of the Grunshi tribe, and they are only slowly beginning to recover from their losses. He seems to have left the Lobis in peace, but they were always good fighters. He then began to go farther afield and tried his luck with the Dagatis, eventually working down to the Walas, here, alas, he met with only too great a success, and after plundering this district, swept away the best of the population as slaves. Samori in his raids had driven the wretched Walas to the north, and now they found themselves being harried as far south as Bole. Eventually a British force, under Captain (later Sir Donald) Stewart, defeated Barbetu near Daboya, and he fled into German territory and died, not long ago, at Yendi. Captain Stewart made soldiers of some of Barbetu's followers with complete success. What a strange race we are!

The population in the Bole district, which we enter to-morrow, is only one man per square mile. This gives you some idea of how these raids have decimated these tribes.

In striking contrast to these days of bloodshed and slave-raiding, with its inevitable miseries, is a message which the Chiefs of Lawra and Tumu have asked me

## 126 LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST

to hand to George<sup>1</sup> The enormous value of this message lies in the fact that it is a perfectly spontaneous testimony, expressed entirely in their own words, to the achievements of British rule in this country during a period of less than thirty years It reads as follows

“ TO HER HIGHNESS PRINCESS MARIE LOUISE

“ Lawra and Tumu Chiefs thank Her Highness Princess Marie Louise for the honour bestowed on them by her visit They beg Her Highness convey following message to His Majesty King George Since we came under the white man's King our people have prospered, our children do not know what hunger is, we do not get our cattle stolen, sickness does not kill so many of our people, we are not raided for slaves We cannot thank our King for the many good things that he has brought among our people We want to tell our King we will always help him loyally

Spoken by Nanweni, Chief of Lawra

Benni Lobi, Interpreter

St J EYRE-SMITH,

D C

From District Lawra ”

Can you find a finer or more striking summary of the justice, uprightness and humanity of the Englishman's administration and of his dealings with those whom the Empire has committed to his care ? And, remember, this is only one message I am giving you , the one from Yendi is similar indeed, all are alike in emphasizing their grateful recognition that “ they are no more raided for slaves,” and their determination to stand loyally behind the white man's King

<sup>1</sup> His Majesty King George

BOLE

*May 20*

I had no time to write yesterday, the day being so fully occupied. We began it with the official Palaver at 7 30, which was a lengthy and very imposing affair, but I need not describe it, as it was practically identical with that at Lawra. After breakfast, I returned to my quarters and spent a useful morning in reviewing my wardrobe and in doing a mass of odd jobs.

There was a race meeting in the afternoon, and I was thrilled to discover that my unmanageable pony of the day before was entered for a race. Of course the little thing won! The races were most entertaining, and luckily devoid of any such exciting incident as we experienced at Lawra. After they were over, the dancing began. There was no settled order in the programme, but all seemed to dance at the same moment, each group for themselves, without reference to what their neighbours might be doing. It was rather confusing, because there was so much to watch that I became quite bewildered in trying to absorb all the varied impressions. It was a curious scene. We sat in a little pavilion, surrounded by a vast and gorgeous company of chiefs and followers, while in front and all round us groups of strange people danced and prouetted about to the inevitable noisy accompaniment of drums and horns and other weird instruments. Some of the songs they sang while performing their Harvest Dances were very striking, and the dancers themselves closely resembled those we had seen at Ougadougou, they wore the ordinary loin-cloths, skins and tails, and a mass of oddments such as beads, bits of bone or metal, hung round their necks. It is interesting to note that the dancers always wear bells round their ankles and often round their wrists as well, like those you see in England for our own old-fashioned

country dances    In addition to these, some of the men had small pieces of metal between their thumb and forefinger, which they used like castanets    The ju-ju men were there, too, but I have already described these Jacks-in-the-green in my letter from the French Territory, so will not do so again    Dancing continued till long after dark, but we returned home at about six

After dinner we had quite a novel entertainment    Colonel Whithall has been most energetic in organizing a troop of Boy Scouts with wonderful success—I should have mentioned that the whole Scout movement has “caught on” tremendously on the Coast—and these boys gave us a most excellent display    We sat round a huge camp-fire which they had built up and listened to their songs, which are so interesting and quaint that I am copying them out for you    Do notice specially the one called “Abiben,” or “The Rogue” you will find it is our old friend “Brer Rabbit,” and the “Tar Baby” from Uncle Remus    The tradition of Brer Rabbit is widespread throughout Africa

#### ABIBEN (THE ROGUE)

Korì nyenga kanga dan bibe  
 A dan ga u ye kanga  
 An iu sialì un nye  
 U warì taran an kyibe  
 An yeu nienì anla sabunì dana  
 Un berì bera un wonin  
 Ka beben nyokì halì a iwala  
 Bila an i un ga yiri boin  
 Darinì jumarì kar heu ga yonì puwo  
 Un nye bun awo ninsala an ahi  
 Un jaru a jukihì buwola  
 Bun batari nyivorinì ba diye  
 Un va ulanpeken anu unudurì  
 Ku nu nì marì be  
 Un bora na dis uminga  
 Ku nuhì nì ja marì be



Un bora na daku lo tenge mi poe  
 Ku poe ni min mari  
 Un mo a mo kyɪ aja jala  
 Ka bioka ka hori ni ga ky ka ye  
 Ku poe peli yeka u an ye bibeunaɪ  
 Un di doo gma yaka  
 Chu yoku ga na b jie

## [ENGLISH]

There was once an old farmer  
 Into his farm visited one day  
 To his surprise he found  
 That half of his yams were gone  
 He wondering who the mischief had committed  
 A trap he set in the form of a cross  
 The rogue to catch by all means  
 This done he quietly returned home  
 Into the farm the rogue went that evening  
 A human form he saw standing  
 He fearing it asked "who are you"  
 The lifeless thing made no answer  
 With his right hand a slap he gave it  
 And on it that hand was stuck  
 He wanting to free himself  
 With the other hand another slap he gave  
 Both hands were stuck firmly on it  
 With his belly he tried to push it down  
 And that too was stuck as the hands  
 He struggled and struggled but all in vain  
 The next day the farmer went to visit his trap  
 To his great joy he saw the rogue on the cross  
 A stick he took and mercilessly he beat him  
 And he took him before their Chief

Just before I left England I met Mr Frank Worthington, who has spent years of his life in Northern Rhodesia, and latterly has been Secretary for Native Affairs in that country. He told me that the story of Brer Rabbit was traditional folk-lore in Northern Rhodesia, and came originally from West Africa, and

gave me his delightful book on the subject. It is, alas, only too easy to understand how the story came to America—the poor slaves took their own songs and legends with them across the water into captivity and handed them on to each successive generation. The only difference between the American and the African story is that in Africa, Brer Rabbit is a hare, and dwells in the moon, and you can see him quite easily when she is full, if you look long enough.

For some strange reason, which I cannot explain, the adventure of Brer Rabbit with the Tar Baby must have made a deep impression on the African mind—perhaps because the results of greed and theft are so disastrous—as you find the same story in Ashanti folklore, only with this difference, that Brer Rabbit is Ananse, the Spider. Here is the gloomy tale of his selfishness.

Once upon a time there was a very clever farmer who had, through his own hard work and with the assistance of his wife and son, made such a success of his farm that he acquired additional land to enlarge it. He planted it with maize, beans and yams, and his harvest yielded at least ten times as much as anything that his neighbours could produce. Egya Ananse was enchanted with his success, but being a very greedy and selfish person, had no intention of sharing his astounding good fortune with his family. He therefore devised a very clever plan whereby he could get rid of them, and told them that, as they had worked so well, they could have a three weeks' holiday when everything was safely gathered into the barns, while he himself would go to the coast and transact some very important business. The wife and son were delighted, and as soon as everything was safely stored, they started off on their holiday. Ananse, however, never meant to go down to the coast, he built himself a comfortable and very roomy hut, stocked it with



CAPTAIN PUCKRIDGE CANE



cooking pots, and then began to prepare an enormous meal, all for himself, which lasted for an entire fortnight

Meanwhile his industrious son was seized with a panic that the land would be overgrown with weeds if left unattended, and returned home to see that all was well. On his way back he happened to pass by his father's barn, and on looking in discovered to his dismay that it was half empty, upon which he ran back to the village and told every one he met of the disaster, and then began to consider what should be done. He decided that the best thing to do was to trap the thief by placing a dummy figure smeared with gum in the path leading to the barn, and having done this, he and some of the villagers then hid themselves to watch for the thief, and, if possible, catch him.

When night fell, and Egya Ananse crept out of his hut in order to steal more food from the barn, he saw, to his surprise, a man standing in his path. He was rather frightened, but as the man did not move he ventured to address him, and on receiving no answer, became very angry and struck at him. His hand naturally stuck to the gum on the figure, and, having hit out again with the other hand, this also stuck, upon which, becoming quite infuriated, he pressed hard with his knees and body, and finally butted at this silent immovable figure with his head, only to find he was held prisoner in a sticky embrace. There he had to remain till day dawned, and with the dawn came his son and the villagers to catch the thief. They were horrified as well as astounded to discover whom they had trapped, and Ananse was so much ashamed at being caught that he hurriedly changed himself into a spider and ran away to hide in a dark corner where no one could see him. This, I understand, is the reason why spiders always take refuge in corners, where they cannot be noticed.

## 132 LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST

### NATIVES' SONG

WALA OR DAGATI	ENGLISH
Saju kuri bine wana	A stone is coming from up
Bon na yeli tindanba	Who will tell the people on the ground
Saju kuri bine wana	A stone is coming from up
Bon na yeli tindanba	Who will tell the people on the ground
Bon na yeli tindanba	Who will tell the people on the ground
Bon na yeli tindanba	Who will tell the people on the ground

WALA OR DAGATI	ENGLISH
Ti wola julun jie ye	We are like red ants
Ti wola julun jie ye	We are like red ants
Ti wola julun jie ye	We are like red ants
Ka kom mam pa	When a river floods
Ti mihi to do	We join together and cross it

Another quaint song is the one, bidding the oil not to laugh at the salt when the latter is "beaten by the rain", it is a paraphrase of the native proverb that "oil should not laugh at salt melted by rain, because it may itself soon be melted by the sun"

WALA OR DAGATI	ENGLISH
Sato yarun	Salt is beaten by the rain
Kpan ta lara	Oil should not laugh
Sato yarun	Salt is beaten by the rain
Kpan ta lara	Oil should not laugh
Kpan ta lara	Oil should not laugh
Huna danna wan	For the sun will soon shine

I am not sure whether the other songs sung to us have any such special meaning as the two preceding ones, they may be just incidents, or little bits of traditional lore and information, which the boys had picked up and woven into song

We left Wa at our usual hour of seven, and this time found our breakfast ready and waiting for us at Ga, which is just an ordinary native village with a rest-house—the village a collection of small round mud huts, with a large "chop" hut in the centre, and the whole surrounded by a wall about four feet high

We spent one hour there and then continued our journey to Bole

Mr Brace Hall, the District Commissioner, met us on arrival and took me to my bungalow, which is very similar to the one I had at Lawra. I was welcomed by a chorus of irate swallows, all chattering and twittering at this foreign invasion, they have now calmed down and decided to ignore me, and are whirling about over my head quite unconcerned. Our lorries came in during the lunch hour, and by the time I had returned to my bungalow everything was unpacked and in order, and (most joyful of all surprises), just as I was settling down for a rest, Captain Puckridge appeared bringing my long-expected and much-desired mail. I sat surrounded by piles of letters and newspapers, not knowing where to begin nor what to open first. There were all your delightful letters from Rome telling me of your wonderful experiences there, and in one moment Africa seemed to vanish into space and I was transported to the Eternal City. I could see it all so well before me—the awe-inspiring moment of the first sight of St Peter's, the view of the city from the Pincio at the hour of sunset, when you hear the Angelus rung by a thousand bells, the flower-market on the Piazza di Spagna, the wide expanse of the Campagna—all the wonders and glories of ancient Rome and its overwhelming history crowded in upon me with a thousand memories, and then, suddenly, the beating of the tom-toms and the many sounds from the native village broke in upon me, and I realized that I was leagues away from you and in the heart of West Africa.

Long before I had finished reading my mail, I was summoned to attend the Palaver, which took place at 4.30. I took quite an important part in the proceedings to-day, as H.E. asked me to present some of the chiefs with the chains and medallions awarded to

them in recognition of their good chieftainship. The medallion consists of a large round silver disc, with the King's head engraved on it, hanging on a heavy silver chain, it is a much-coveted and much-prized honour, and proves that the owner is a good and loyal chief who cares for the welfare of his people and is doing all he can to develop his district in the way of road-making and cultivation. After the Palaver was ended, we drove round the village, but I fear I did not display so much interest as usual, as I was longing all the time to get back to my mail. I shall not finish it all to-day, but keep some of it for to-morrow, and can then pretend that it has come by the ordinary morning's post. To-morrow will be full of excitement, as we are going to travel over the new road to Bamboi, this we were originally to have done on foot, but through the superhuman efforts of Mr. Brace Hall a road fit to motor over has been constructed in a few months—a really remarkable achievement, because, as I told you before, the population in the Bole district works out at one man per square mile, so you will realize that labour is scarce. I shall be sorry to leave Bole, for though we have been here such a short time, I have been very happy and my bungalow has been very home-like and comfortable. Malam has already reminded me three times that "Bath live," and if I do not hurry I shall be late for dinner. Good night, and a thousand loving thanks for your dear letters.

BANDA NKWANTA,

May 21

"No one knows the story of to-morrow's dawn"<sup>1</sup>  
 Never was a truer word spoken, and how little, when we bade each other good night last evening at Bole, did we anticipate to-day's series of misadventures. When

<sup>1</sup> Ashanti proverb.





BANDA NKWANIA NT





we left our peaceful camp at seven o'clock this morning, it was deliciously cool, with actually a little breeze blowing, and every one was in the highest spirits and full of curiosity as to what the new road would be like.

We halted at Malwe for breakfast, and at about nine o'clock proceeded on our journey to Bamboi. The surface of the road was fairly good, though in places suspiciously soft and wet, and we were able to travel at a good speed and congratulated ourselves on having so far escaped any breakdown. I think that some of us had secret misgivings as to whether our six cars and sixteen lorries could possibly get through without a "hold-up" of some sort, but we kept our fears to ourselves, and to each other asserted that all was well and that the road was perfect. This optimistic and cheerful attitude continued until the Lanchester (H E's and my car) came to a sudden standstill and nothing could move it. We bundled out on to the road and, being soon joined by the rest of the party, there we stood gazing at a long line of immovable cars, each one in turn having by now become firmly and deeply embedded in a morass to which there seemed no bottom, our beautiful road which appeared on the surface so solid was in reality a hopeless bog. It was a piteous sight, and worse was to come, for in the distance we heard the sixteen lorries on their way, and we knew, even before their arrival, that they too must stick fast.

No, you never can imagine what the scene was like, the Lanchester had settled down rather on one side, which gave it a somewhat drunken, but withal self-satisfied and obstinate, look, as much as to say, "I can't move, and I won't move, and I will go no farther." The other cars were quite as bad and had all stuck in the most stupid and helpless attitudes, the sun was blazing over our heads, with no shade anywhere, except a few stunted trees and scrubby bushes, everything was very wet and boggy and the sixteen lorries were

fast approaching their doom. It was tragic, but also intensely comic. Thanks to Samori and Barbetu's slave-raiding, no village was in sight, and therefore no help was available, so our party had to haul out the cars by themselves. We cut down branches, uprooted young trees and then shoved them under the wheels of the cars, trying to lever them up out of what now seemed pits rather than holes, but in vain. The only advantage, when the lorries fell into a similar sad plight, was that we had the assistance of the other drivers, our "boys" and orderlies, and at last, after much hauling, lifting, pushing and dragging, the Lanchester actually deigned to stir, and with a superhuman effort of her engine, floundered on to firmer ground. Then we turned our attention to the Crossley and the other cars, and the same performance of shoving and hauling was gone through for each in turn. Then came the lorries, from which everything, of course, had to be unloaded, and the Northern Territories witnessed a sight which they had never seen before, the furniture of a whole camp strewn over the bush.

H E considered that we could do no good by waiting for the lorries to be reloaded, so we cautiously continued our perilous journey, but in a very short while subsided once more, this time in a worse bog than before. I won't weary you with a repetition of the proceedings—suffice it to say that eight times have we stuck and been pulled out between Bole and this queer little haven of rest, Banda Nkwanta. I don't know what has happened to the lorries, nor to the rest of the party, the Lanchester, the Crossley and the faithful old Buick with Alice and the Doctor inside her have got through somehow, but the others are still on the road, and there being no possibility of reaching Bamboi to-day, H E has decided to allow us to halt here for the night.

It was originally planned to make Banda Nkwanta

one of our rest-camps, had we done this journey on foot, so besides the two usual little mud huts in the rest-house compound, an imposing array of Zana huts have been built to accommodate the party. Alice and I have had the mud huts assigned to us as our quarters, and in one of these I am sitting and trying to write to you.

Have you realized what it means to be separated from your lorries when trekking? Well, it means no food, no bed, no chair, and, worst of all, no bath. Judging by the slow progress of our three cars from the last breakdown to this place, I see little prospect of anything turning up for hours and hours.

The Chief of the village has given what help he could by providing a few chairs for us poor destitute travellers, and Captain Puckridge seized upon a cushion out of the Crossley and, with my dressing-case and small brown bag as a pillow, has fixed up quite a comfortable bed for me. He has now rushed back twenty miles to where we saw the last of our lorries, with the firm determination to bring mine into camp to-night at all costs.

I said that the loss of our lorries meant, amongst other deprivations, the loss of food, but here Decima came to our rescue. She had, all unbeknown to us, secreted an emergency "chop-box" in her Crossley and, just when we were somewhat plaintively reminding each other that breakfast seemed a very long while ago, she announced the welcome and astonishing news that she could provide lunch. We carried the precious box up to the "chop" hut and stood eagerly round her as she unpacked her treasures: a cold guinea-fowl, a tin of canned peaches and two bottles of soda-water. There were no plates, no knives, no forks, and, of course, no napkins, but that did not matter as a calabash full of water was produced in which we washed our fingers at intervals between the courses. The peaches were rather a messy dish, as we had to dip

## 138 LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST

into the tin and fish them out as best we could , but we mixed the juice with the soda-water and found it absolutely delicious

For some surprising reason the Doctor seemed embarrassed by this unconventional meal and discreetly turned his back upon me whilst he consumed the leg of a guinea-fowl, held daintily between finger and thumb , I had no such nice feelings and grasped my portion of food thankfully with both hands The bird was carved with a pocket-knife

I, who, as you know, am vain of my cooking, offered my services rather persistently, until I was told that even if there was food to cook, there was nothing to cook it in, after which information I remained silent and confined myself to eating

My quarters are simple enough a round hut of mud with a pointed grass roof—that is all Alice has the same just opposite I am really quite comfortable, and the only thing to worry over seriously is that, if our beds do not arrive, we shall have no mosquito nets—and then what are we to do ? I have suggested spending the night in the motors with the flaps up, which would be hot and stuffy, it's true, but at least safe from the danger of being bitten and perhaps contracting malaria

I am now going to test the comfort of sleeping on my dressing-case, as I have been up since five o'clock and feel rather in need of a rest It will also help to pass the time and prevent me from wondering about the possibilities of dinner to-night This sounds ungrateful to the memory of that excellent guinea-fowl

BAMBOI

*May 22*

My lorry did come in last night—I knew it would—but in spite of my joy and relief at its arrival and all it

meant in the way of bath and mosquito net, I felt very guilty when I realized what appalling efforts had been necessary to bring it in. After it, one by one, slowly and painfully, the other lorries crawled and limped into camp, and we sat round our camp-fire and watched this sad and halting procession. The Doctor's lorry was among those that failed to turn up, and as all the filters were on board, he refused to desert her for fear of anything happening to them, and therefore decided to spend the night out in the open, sleeping underneath the lorry. You can well imagine that none of us were inclined to sit up late, and very soon calm and quiet descended on a camp full of very tired people.

The night was, in some ways, quite as trying as the day, at least for me, for (of course) we had a dust-storm to add to everything else, just between the hours of two and four, and I was smothered in sand, grit and small stones. I felt just like the Princess lying on the pea in Hans Andersen's fairy-tales, for whichever way I lay or tried to curl myself up, I seemed to knock against a young rock and felt bruised all over, and, after all, when she complained of her bad night, the Princess had sixteen mattresses and twenty-four feather beds between her and the pea, while I had nothing. When Alice came in this morning at 5.30 to ask how I was, I replied, "A vile night! I slept upon a gravel path."

But this was only a minor discomfort as compared with the journey to Bamboi. We thought we had touched the limit of what cars can do in the way of being bogged, but, no! we were quite wrong, as our journey from Banda Nkwanta to Bamboi proved. It really ceased to be funny, and even my sense of humour was severely tested. The heat was frankly abominable, and I will leave it to you to fill in the adjective as regards the road. I have lost count of how many times we stuck and were hauled out, but I did once or twice

wonder why we ever took the trouble to get back into the car, when it only meant getting out again in a few moments. The faithful Buick quite broke down and, amidst other debris of all kinds, is lying derelict somewhere on the road, where she will remain till the next dry season.

Finally we hit upon the quite good plan of building up a corduroy road of young trees and branches on the worst bits of bog, and then spreading over them the huge tarpaulins kept to cover up the lorries in case of rain. This gave some kind of foundation for the motor to pass over, and dozens of tarpaulins decorate the Northern Territories as a memento of our trek. At one place we were specially proud of our improvised road and firmly convinced that the whole fleet of cars could pass over in safety, in fact, so elated were we with the appearance of our labours that H E, who was driving the Lanchester, called out to me, "Come along, Ma'am, and have a joy-ride." I hopped nimbly into the car, and he started the engine, amidst the cheers of the onlookers, but there was a terrific noise, a grinding of gears, and, while the wheels went round and round, the car deliberately sank on to her side in another hole, so I once more got out and sat by the roadside. Thus and thus we dug our way in and out as far as Bamboi, and here we now are on the banks of the Volta, our last halting-place in the Northern Territories, already gazing across the river towards the mysterious forests of Ashanti.

Our camp is very similar to that at Banda Nkwanta, and consists of a few small mud huts, and temporary Zana huts to accommodate the Staff. The strenuous efforts of the last forty-eight hours have begun to tell on the party. Captain Doole, our Transport Officer, has collapsed with a high temperature, the result of hours and hours of work in the sun, and Captain Puckridge has retired to bed, under the Doctor's orders, in a





BRIDGE BETWEEN KANDA KAWAIA AND HAMBORI N. I.



state of utter exhaustion. I am only surprised that the casualty list is not larger. Our "boys" and drivers are all worn out. It is quite a fallacy to imagine that the African does not mind the sun—he objects to it quite as much as the European, though of course he is better able to withstand the baleful effect of its rays. No native, if he can help it, will do any work in the middle of the day, and though our experiences may sound very amusing on paper, it was not at all funny for those who had the hard work of dragging out perpetually during two consecutive days those six heavy cars and sixteen lorries, and also the responsibility of bringing them safe into camp. Remember also that, when they did turn up, the "boys" had the whole business of settling us in, and unpacking our things. Malam has surpassed himself during this crisis, he always insists on attending to all my wants—real and imaginary—even to preparing my bath, before asking permission to go off duty or even "find chop". Needless to say, my lorry was again the first to come in to-day. I don't know how Captain Puckridge managed to accomplish this miracle, because when last I saw it, early this morning, it seemed to me a total wreck, and all my belongings were scattered about in a bog.

Alas, Major Walker-Leigh has just left us on his way back to Tamale, via Kintampo and Kumasi. It is with very genuine regret that I took leave of him, for he has been the most delightful companion, a perfect tower of strength in every emergency, and always courteous and charming, with an unfailing sense of humour. I fully understand why he is so popular and beloved by all his officials, as well as by the natives, it is really beautiful to see the unbounded confidence and trust the African has towards him, and it is indeed well deserved, for he is the very finest type of Colonial Administrator one can imagine.

It has been a marvellous experience, this trek through the Northern Territories not merely on account of the thrilling interest of travelling through a country so little known to the outside world and as yet, thank goodness, a sealed book to the ordinary tourist, but because it has made me realize and honour the splendid and so often unrecorded labours of our Colonial Service in the far-off outposts of Empire

How can we, in our ease and comfort at home, understand what these men are up against? It is quite impossible. Only through the knowledge gained by personal experience can one appreciate the devotion to duty, the self-sacrifice and magnificent courage of those who are serving their country under the most difficult and trying conditions

Do you know the size of the Northern Territories? They are 30,600 square miles, and are administered by the Chief Commissioner and twenty-one Political Officers (District Commissioners), twenty-two white men "running" a country of 30,600 square miles with a native population of 530,000! It sounds rather absurd, and would be quite incredible were the twenty-two men other than British. The only armed force we have in the Northern Territories is half a company of the W A F F, with two British Officers and two British N C O's, and 450 Northern Territories Constabulary, commanded by four British officers, so you see there are only about thirty white men to administer and keep order in this huge area

KINTAMPO, ASHANTI

*May 24*

We arrived here yesterday in time for lunch, and I cannot tell you how thankful we were when, on reaching the top of the steep scarp, we emerged from the forest and drew up in front of the District Commis-

sioner's bungalow It meant two days of rest and quiet

If you imagine for one moment that Bamboi meant the end of our transport troubles, you are greatly mistaken The Volta lay between us and Ashanti, and the cars and lorries had to be got across by means of a pontoon—a sort of rough platform, fixed on to canoes As soon as the lorries began limping into camp the Governor decided it would be as well to start getting some of them across without delay, so the sad procession restarted and made its way down to the river The road was very steep and slippery and lay between high banks, and after a short time messages of distress and appeals for assistance came pouring back into camp, and Decima and I rushed off to see what was happening

I never saw such a hopeless mess as that road and that drift The pontoon was not strong enough to bear the weight of the lorries, and had quietly gone to the bottom with one of them on board, the road was churned up into a morass, lorries were in all directions, with their contents, as usual, strewn about all over the place Mercifully there was no lack of assistance, as 300 men had joined us on our arrival at Bamboi, who had originally been intended to act as carriers, had we walked there from Bole, and, with their more than welcome help, the arduous task of hauling up the pontoon and lorry was in full progress when we arrived

The Governor had been standing on the pontoon when the disaster took place, and in consequence had a totally unexpected and unintentional bath, but by the time we arrived was directing operations (clad in very odd garments) from the top of the partially submerged lorry The noise and confusion defy all description, the entire village had collected to watch the fun and every one was talking, arguing and offering admirable but quite useless advice At length the pontoon was raised and the lorry hauled on to firmer ground, but

by now it was getting so near dusk that everything had to be abandoned , so, as there was nothing more to do, we wandered back to camp

Next morning, almost before it was light, the work was resumed, but with little better success I do wish you could have some faint idea of what the scene looked like , all our possessions and loads were piled up into separate heaps, and on the top of each sat an orderly with his rifle across his knees , a long string of lorries blocked the way to where the road dipped down to the drift, and the road itself was a complete bog, with holes two feet deep or more The wretched pontoon seemed all right, but was quite prepared to sink again the moment a car or lorry ventured to board it I must not forget to mention another small detail there had been a tornado during the night, which had completely finished the destruction of the road

At length the Crossley was sent to try her fate, but she sank at once and subsided, with her back wheels in what seemed a bottomless pit This was really serious, and drastic measures had to be devised if we were not all to remain sitting on the river bank till the next dry season Suddenly ropes were produced from somewhere, which were made fast to the car, and then a lorry was unlimbered, and, having lett the trolly part on the high ground, and moved cautiously half-way down the hill, the drag ropes were fastened to her, and, with the help of 300 men hauling at the ropes, she backed up the hill, so as to pull the car out of the hole After about an hour, the Crossley condescended to allow herself to be rescued from what had every appearance of being a watery grave Meanwhile a few of the villagers had fetched some more canoes, and these were floated under the pontoon and lashed to it, to give additional support and strength When the time came for the Lanchester to cross, she behaved beautifully



CROSSING THE VOLTA AT IRANC





and gave comparatively little trouble, and by about eleven o'clock the two cars were safely on the other side and we were once more in Ashanti. We left the lorries to their fate, and H E, Decima, Alice and I and the Private Secretary came straight through to this lovely place.

It seemed strange to be once more in the silence and quiet of these vast forests, and coming direct from the bare arid "orchard country" the contrast was all the more striking. Parts of it reminded me of the New Forest with its beautiful open glades, only instead of English oaks and beeches and the familiar thick tangle of bracken and brambles, I was surrounded by every variety of lovely palm, enormous silk cotton trees, with orchids and strange creepers trailing from their branches, and giant ferns intermingled with poinsettias as undergrowth. It was indescribably lovely, and H E said to me, "So much beauty is almost absurd."

Kintampo is an important station, with several very comfortable bungalows. The District Commissioner is Captain Wilkinson, who came down to the Volta to receive us at the boundary of his district, but remained behind to help bring in our transport, while his very pleasant and able little wife did the honours when we arrived. She had prepared the most excellent lunch and taken no end of trouble to make everything comfortable and charming. My bungalow is rather like the one I had at Tamale, with a delightful roomy balcony, which I have turned into my "bed-sitting-room," using the real bedroom as my dressing-room. It seems so strange to see flowers in a house again and to walk on wooden floors, instead of dried mud, that I feel quite out of place in these luxurious surroundings.

After the loneliness and wildness of the Northern Territories, Kintampo strikes me as almost the hub of the universe. It is quite a large station, and a company of the W A F F is quartered here. The bunga-

lows are roomy and well built, but have one great drawback—they have all been built at a wrong angle as regards the view. I have wandered all round my veranda and only by dint of hanging over the edge and nearly committing suicide can I catch a glimpse of one of the most beautiful views in Ashanti. I cannot think why the bungalows have been built so provokingly, it may be, of course, to avoid the sun or to catch the breeze, but as, owing to the density of the great forests, wide open vistas are so rare in this country, it does seem a pity, when you do happen to be blessed with one of surpassing beauty, to build your house so that you cannot see it.

We went down to the officers' mess this morning and I visited some of their huts, which are built of "swish" with grass roofs, one of them was in a perilous condition as the spars supporting the roof were almost crumbling away from the attentions of the white ant.

The deeper one penetrates into the lives of these people, the more one finds that everything connected with them has its perfectly reasonable explanation in their legends and folk-lore, or, to put it into very dull language savouring of platitude, the more one realizes cause and effect. For instance, I have given you in one of my early letters a long description of the destructiveness of the White Ant. It was, I fear, a somewhat tedious account, but now I am going to tell you the real reason why the White Ant is out to destroy everything he can reach. I have found this quaint old story in a book I have been reading, and it relates to another not very creditable episode in the career of Ananse, the spider.

There was a dreadful famine in Ananse's country, and food became so scarce that even the tiniest grain of corn was worth its weight in gold. Ananse was very disconsolate, very miserable, and practically starving,

he wandered out one day into the forest in the vain search for food, where, to his joy, he came upon a dead antelope. Feeling quite sure that if his good luck were known he would never be able to get his precious load to his own house in safety, he wrapped it up in his grass mat and tying it up firmly, placed it on his head and then began his journey homewards, all the while crying bitterly and telling every one he met that his grandfather was dead and he was carrying the old man home to be buried.

Presently he met a Lion and a Leopard, to whom he told the same piteous tale of his bereavement, but they, knowing only too well Ananse's cunning and deceitful habits, misdoubted the story and consulted together how best to outwit him and unmask his fraud. They decided to intercept him on his way home by taking a short cut and reaching a path they knew he would have to cross, here they hid themselves behind a tree, and soon espied Ananse panting and groaning under his heavy load. Lion and Leopard began to shake the tree violently, uttering loud and terrible cries, Ananse was terrified, and stopping dead, dropped his load and fled panic-stricken down the path. Then Lion and Leopard ran out to see what the load really contained, and on discovering that it was a fine young antelope instead of an old grandfather, decided that they would enjoy the feast instead of Ananse.

But as soon as Ananse had recovered from his fright, he cautiously retraced his steps to regain his load, and finding that it had disappeared he soon suspected that Lion and Leopard had played a trick upon him and determined to revenge himself. He forthwith asked Lizard to help him and, when he felt quite sure that he had won all his sympathy, told him the story of his loss, omitting, however, to mention his guilty intention of keeping the antelope all to himself. He then proceeded to file Lizard's teeth into sharp points and

sent him off to Lion and Leopard to borrow some fire, pretending it was for his own needs

Lizard did all he was told, and everything happened just as Ananse had planned. Lion and Leopard were so struck and envious of Lizard's sharp teeth that they inquired how he had come by them, and on hearing that "Filing Spider" had sharpened them for him, the two friends bethought themselves how much better they could eat the bones of the antelope if their teeth were sharpened. So off they went together to the house of "Filing Spider" (who was really Ananse in disguise), demanding to have their teeth filed, and the spider agreed to do it, but declared that as they were both so big he must hang them up to reach them. As soon as Lion and Leopard were safely strung up and quite powerless, spider told them who he really was and, calling in the whole of his family, they all began to laugh and jeer at their plight. It was bad enough to be helpless prisoners, but worse was to come, for Ananse went and fetched the antelope, prepared a large feast to which he invited all his friends, and then sat down and ate it before the eyes of Lion and Leopard, who were now very hungry and very miserable in this most humiliating and uncomfortable position.

Presently, however, a White Ant and his family happened to come their way. Leopard called out to them, told them what had happened, and begged them to liberate himself and his friend. White Ant took pity on these two luckless creatures, and calling all his family together, set to work to free them, which was accomplished after much trouble and labour.

Filled with gratitude at their kindness, Leopard and Lion at once began preparing a big feast, to which they invited White Ant and all his children. Unfortunately Ananse, who was lurking close by, overheard the invitation, and hurriedly disguising himself, and all his rela-

tions, so as to look like white ants, presented himself at Leopard's house. The party was warmly welcomed and every one sat down to the feast in high glee, and not until all was eaten and Ananse and his relations had departed did the real guests arrive, when Lion and Leopard, mistaking them for Ananse, were so enraged that they revenged themselves by pouring boiling water over them, and killed every single one except Father White Ant. Needless to say he was furious at this heartless ingratitude for all his kindness, and swore that he would never help anyone again, but on the contrary, from now onwards, destroy everything that came his way. And, alas, Father Ant has kept his word!

My good fortune as a traveller has so far held good in a marvellous manner and I think my luck must have communicated itself to the entire party, for up to the present moment not one of us, either European or African, has seen even the tip of a snake's tail or anything more dangerous than a harmless buck. Just before I arrived at the mess, one of the officers killed a black mamba on the veranda, and this, as you know, is the most deadly of all African snakes, I own to being a little disappointed that its death took place before, and not during, my visit.

\* \* \* \* \*

6 p m

The Doctor has just been in to see me—not on account of my health, which is quite marvellous. I have never felt so well in all my life, and have not once been sick or sorry since I left Liverpool. But, alas, the fearful fatigue and strain of the last three days' trek from Bole have proved too much for my poor Alice. She had not entirely recovered from her touch of the sun before she started on that disastrous trek

to Bamboi, and she is now quite worn out. The Doctor has strongly urged me to let her go straight through to Kumasi, leaving here to-morrow morning, and breaking the journey for one night at Ejura, as he will not allow her to undertake the additional fatigue of the long motor drive to Wenchi and Sunyani.

Alice is in despair at the thought of leaving me even for these few days, but I feel that the Doctor is right and that in this climate his word is law and must be instantly obeyed. So the present arrangement is that we all go together as far as Nkoranza and that then she and the Doctor go on to Ejura while we proceed to Wenchi. I am very sad and rather worried about it, but a few days' complete rest at Kumasi in civilized surroundings and with all the many little comforts necessarily dispensed with while trekking will, I trust, put her right.

I had my first really bad experience of the tsetse-fly this afternoon. At about 4.30 Alice and I motored out with Decima, Mrs. Wilkinson and Captain Puckridge to the Fuller Falls, a most lovely waterfall hidden away in the forest about five or six miles down the road we came along yesterday. Captain Wilkinson had spent endless time and trouble in making the branch forest road fit for motoring, so as to save a rather tiring walk, but as soon as we had turned off the main road and got into the gloom and dusk of the forest, we were attacked and literally devoured by hordes of tsetse. These fiends have a very painful bite and draw blood at once. We spent most of our time in what looked like a free fight, but was in reality only our efforts to keep them at bay.

The tsetse is about the size of an ordinary house-fly, but slightly thinner and more elegantly shaped, and it folds its wings flat down its back, one over the top of the other, rather like scissor-blades, while those of the house-fly lie apart at the tips. For your comfort



CROSSING THE VOLTA FROM THE N. INTO ASHANTI AT BAMBOO N. I.





and peace of mind, do let me tell you that there is no reason why you should develop sleeping-sickness every time a tsetse bites you. I do not think you want a long medical harangue on the various species of tsetse and the result of their bites, it will be enough for you to know that the one that carries the terrible cattle disease so fatal to all animals does not infect man, while the "sleepy tsetse," which attacks man with such disastrous results, is harmless to animals, and, like the mosquito, it is only the infected fly that can transmit disease. The Doctor stationed here gave me a long and interesting lecture last evening after dinner on sleeping-sickness. He is desperately keen on the subject and is doing very good work in that line. There are a fair amount of cases in Kintampo and the district, but so far all are doing well under the present treatment.

Considering how prevalent the tsetse is on the Gold Coast, the percentage of cases suffering from sleeping-sickness is not as high comparatively as in some parts of Africa. The painfulness of the bite, and not the fear of the possible disease, worries one most. I am already a mass of lumps and bumps as the result of my afternoon's expedition, and have spent a lazy time in painting them copiously with iodine, which, though it does not cure the pain or irritation, prevents the bite from becoming poisoned.

Meanwhile I am forgetting to tell you anything further about the Fuller Falls. They were discovered by, and named after, Sir Francis Fuller, a former Chief Commissioner of Ashanti. They are not very remarkable as regards height, but for sheer quiet loveliness they are unrivalled, and I cannot imagine a more delicious spot to spend a peaceful hour or so than by this quite unexpected waterfall in the depths of the Ashanti forest.

We left our motors some distance down the road and

walked about two hundred yards up to the Falls, crossing over a perfectly new bridge specially constructed for our benefit. This bridge I then formally opened and named after myself. I am not sure that this was part of the original programme, but it seemed a pity that such an excellent bridge should not receive some special distinction. We then proceeded to scramble through pools and streams till we reached the little river into which these falls tumble and splash, here we remained for some time until the waning light and the tsetse drove us to take shelter in our cars and return home.

My account of our stay at Kintampo must sound very tame and uneventful after all the exciting happenings I have described to you in my previous letters, but I can assure you the complete quiet and absence of stirring incidents has been a most welcome change for every one and I am fully prepared for anything that may befall us during to-morrow's journey.

As usual I have been trying to gather up stray little scraps of information about the district and its people. We are now in the Western Province of Ashanti. The Mos, who inhabit this part of the country, are descended from the Grunshus, and migrated into Ashanti from the north over one hundred years ago. Their arrival in these parts does not seem to have been attended by much success, for they were first attacked and defeated by the Tekimans and then by the Nkoranzis, who forced them to retreat towards the Black Volta, here they ultimately established themselves, and only recently have been declared independent of the Nkoranzis.

The Mos have some strange traditions (one might almost call them idiosyncrasies), one of which is their "hatred" of gold, the origin of this curious dislike is absolutely unknown, but no one is allowed to wear or possess any gold ornament or coin, the only exception to this drastic rule being the King's Medal for

## LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST 153

native chiefs, which is worn by the Omanhene. Another of their peculiarities is a dislike of grass-roofed houses, which the majority of them will not live in, and a preference for the flat-roofed mud huts of the Northern Territories. I do not know whether this comes from a sentimental attachment to the land of their origin. They even refuse to build a grass-roofed rest-house for Europeans, the only reason given being that their ancestors "hated" grass.

### SUNYANI

*May 25*

Once again our plans have been upset. I was to have opened the new and very important road from Sunyani to Kumasi, but as the rains have washed part of it away, we have had to abandon the plan and shall now remain here till Wednesday, and then go on to Ejura, staying there the night, and reaching Kumasi at midday on Thursday. We left Kintampo very early this morning and motored to Nkoranza, a run of thirty-six miles, where we breakfasted and held a very interesting Palaver.

Nkoranza is next to Kintampo the most important centre in this district. The origin of the name is rather quaint, and means "three old men". The story runs that when this tribe migrated here from the north they came upon this tiny village, whose sole inhabitants, as far as I can make out, were three old men, here the strangers stopped and made it their head-quarters, adopting the name. They are not pure Ashanti and really belong to the Brong tribe.

I scarcely think that these odd details can possibly amuse you, but here is a story of real thrilling interest about Nkoranza's wonderful Queen-Mother, Effua Dopa, or Effua Boahin, who, though quite an old lady, still remains the most important person in their political

world, if she appears at a Palaver it is a sure sign that there are questions of great weight under discussion. We held our Palaver after breakfast, and while we were waiting for the Omanhene and the other chiefs to take up their positions, there was much speculation as to whether the Queen-Mother would appear or not. When all was ready we left the comforting shade of our rest-house and walked towards the assembled chiefs to pay our ceremonial visit, and when this was concluded, we sat down under beautiful state umbrellas and awaited the return visit. At this moment there was something of a stir, and commotion, in the crowd and the little old Queen-Mother stepped forward with the most perfect dignity and graciousness and informed all present, through her linguist, that she had come to the Palaver to greet the "Grandchild of her good Friend, the great Queen Victoria." She then beckoned to her attendants, who brought fruit and eggs and yams, which she gave me as a token of goodwill and friendship. Though I am sure you will be charmed at hearing of this delightful and courteous welcome to me, it is not really the important thing I want to tell you about this wonderful little Queen-Mother.

During the great Ashanti rising in 1900, a certain Captain Parmeter was travelling down from Gambaga (Northern Territories) to the coast on his way home on sick leave, he was following very much the same route as ourselves, but his trek was accomplished under very different circumstances. To begin with, he was ill, the journey had to be done on foot, and he was passing through a disturbed country full of hostile tribes. On reaching Kintampo he halted for some days, intending, like ourselves, to proceed via Nkoranza to Kumasi. When he arrived at Nkwanta he found that a large and important Palaver had just been concluded, and, on asking for an extra carrier to



TAVALR AI SUNYANI ASHANTI



replace one of his own men who had fallen ill, he was met by an insolent refusal on the part of the chief. He does not seem to have attached undue importance to this rude behaviour, and after a short halt continued his journey. But soon serious trouble arose among his carriers, who announced that they would proceed no farther, and gave as their reason a report that some traders had been robbed at Sekredumasi, the village for which they were making, and said that they themselves had caught sight of armed men lurking in the bush.

Captain Parmeter, who was accompanied by a dresser named Lampty, did not even now suspect any real danger and ordered them to continue the march, sending his headman on in advance into the village to prepare his quarters. Shots were soon heard in the neighbourhood of Sekredumasi and all the carriers abandoned their loads and fled, but even now he did not realize his peril, and, with the help of his hammock-men, set about collecting fresh carriers.

When enough of these had been got together, they gathered up all the loads except two, and while he himself started off to track his missing men, he told off two carriers to bring in the remaining two loads and rejoin the advance party. Very soon the men came rushing back with the news that the road behind them was full of armed men, and Mr Lampty, turning round, saw to his horror a large force following them. Captain Parmeter promptly jumped out of his hammock, and was met by a volley of shots, which fortunately passed over his head. He fired his revolver into their midst and sent them flying into the bush, from which, however, they soon emerged again, apparently with the intention of making a determined attack on these two lonely Englishmen. After firing his few remaining shots and discovering that the barrel of his revolver had burst, there was nothing left to do but to try and

find safety in flight Both men rushed down the path, Captain Parmeter, weakened by fever and illness, struggling on gallantly, till at last he was forced to turn into the forest and seek shelter in the dense undergrowth Lampty refused to desert him and lay down by his side to give him what protection he could

The pursuit swept past them, only to return very shortly, and a council of war was held close to the very spot where the two men were hidden, while, having discovered traces of the fugitives' footsteps, search parties were dispatched into the bush Captain Parmeter and Mr Lampty overheard enough to know that, even if they did escape being taken prisoner now, they would never reach Nkoranza alive, because, at that morning's Palaver at Nkwanta, the people of the three intervening villages had sworn to kill them, should they try to force their way through

It was now growing rapidly darker and the search was temporarily abandoned Under cover of the night Captain Parmeter and Mr Lampty left their hiding-place and struck deeper into the forest, but their advance was slow and painful, as thick creepers and undergrowth impeded every step, tripping them up and almost strangling them, while long cruel thorns tore their arms and faces to ribbons Captain Parmeter, utterly exhausted and worn out, implored Mr Lampty to leave him to his fate and try to save himself, but this his companion absolutely refused to do, and eventually took the unfortunate man on his back

Can you picture to yourself what that journey must have been? A grievously sick man, exhausted and almost unconscious, hanging round the neck of his friend, who, step by step, fought his way through the impenetrable depths of a West African forest—while, with returning daylight, the search was resumed, and it was really a miracle that they were not discovered, as the enemy passed repeatedly within a few yards of



the spot where they lay concealed. Not the least trying part of all they had to endure was the discomfort caused by the myriads of flies and mosquitoes, ants and other creeping and biting things, one wonders how they remained sane through this ghastly ordeal, especially when one remembers that they had neither food nor water.

At last this awful day drew to a close, and as soon as it was dark they once more attempted to struggle on. It sounds like a romance, but is a fact, that at one place, on striking the open path, they stumbled across a large party of the enemy fast asleep, and threading their way cautiously in and out of them succeeded in slipping through without rousing a single man. Towards morning they came across a friendly native, who mercifully turned out to be one of their own men, and soon after this they were joined by four more of the carriers who had deserted them at the beginning of their troubles.

By this time Captain Parmeter was so weak and ill that an attempt was made to carry him, but the men, too, were in such a state of exhaustion from lack of food that they soon collapsed. Somehow they eventually succeeded in getting through two of the three hostile villages that separated them from Nkoranza.

The third and last village very nearly proved their undoing, as they had not only to ask their way but also to procure carriers and a hammock for Captain Parmeter. The Chief appeared very surly and obstructive, and one of their own men reported that he had heard the orders given to have them shot. The situation was desperate, and the only thing to do was to play a game of bluff. Captain Parmeter pretended that a large force of white men was fast approaching, and said that if any harm befell him, the Chief and his whole village would have to suffer, no matter what orders had been given or who had given them. This

## 158 LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST

had the desired effect, and within a short time the little party reached Nkoranza in safety. Here they were greeted with the news that the Ashantis were in open revolt throughout the country. The Omanhene of Nkoranza, who had gone to Kumasi to interview the Governor, had arrived too late to see him, the town being already surrounded by the enemy, and had sent back orders to all his war chiefs to join the rebels at once.

During the Omanhene's absence, the whole district remained under the rule and in charge of the Queen-Mother. She was strongly against her people joining the Ashantis and thus declaring war on the Government, but realized that she had not sufficient support from the chiefs openly to oppose or countermand the Omanhene's definite orders, or to hold the powerful war party in check. It was, therefore, very difficult for her to prove her loyalty to Captain Parmeter when he first interviewed her. He had been able to get a telegram through to Kintampo, warning the District Commissioner of the danger and urging him to get into touch as soon as possible with Major Morris, who, in command of a considerable force, was marching south from the Northern Territories, but just after the telegram was dispatched, the rebels cut the wire. The Queen-Mother held a meeting of chiefs that same day, and announced that through this telegram their treacherous plans would now be known in Kintampo, and when they realized that all hope of a surprise attack was at an end, they began to listen to her wiser councils. Eventually she won over a good many of the chiefs to her side and had the satisfaction of giving Captain Parmeter not only proof of her own loyalty, but also an assurance that her people would not join the rebels.

It is too long a story to tell you of all the events that took place during those anxious days before the relief column reached Nkoranza. After the Oman-

hene returned home, the struggle between the loyal Queen-Mother and the war party became intensified, and she fought nobly and gallantly to preserve the peace, even at the risk of her own life

But the situation soon became desperate. The Queen-Mother realized that she was losing complete control over her people, and in despair at last sent an urgent message to Kintampo for the English to come to her assistance with the least possible delay, as it was impossible for her to hold out much longer. Major Morris, who had reached Kintampo, sent back word imploring her at all costs not to give in, and promising to come with the whole of his armed force to relieve her. The entire population was now in a state of turmoil and seething with rebellion. The Omanhene was hiding in the bush, but hundreds of armed men surrounded the village, who were prepared to resist by force any action of the Queen-Mother's or any advance of our troops. Quite unmoved, however, by their threatening attitude, she continued to hold out, and, on the arrival of the relief column, she went out, accompanied by those of her followers who had remained loyal, to welcome and bring them in.

Major Morris at once took possession of the Silver Stool of Nkoranza, but later, at a special Palaver, he formally handed it back to the Queen-Mother, thanking and praising her for the conspicuous bravery and great loyalty she had shown. Had she failed us the whole of the Nkoranzas would have risen, and had they succeeded in their intended attack on Kintampo, the consequences would have been disastrous.

I think I must quote the passage out of Major Morris's dispatch to the Governor concerning her splendid conduct.

"No words can express, and no reward is too great for, the admirable way in which the Princess behaved. The whole credit of the non-rising of the Nkoranzas is

due to her unswerving fidelity to the British Government, even at the risk of her own life" She maintained the same splendid devotion to the Government right through to the end of the hostilities

If it does not bore you, do read once more the extracts in one of my earlier letters telling you about the presentation of Mary's Silver Stool, you will notice the important part the Queen-Mother of Mampon played in all the ceremonies connected with the making and consecration of the stool, and, by comparing it with the story I have just told you of this other Queen-Mother at Nkoranza, you will gain a clearer idea of the vast importance of these royal ladies, as well as of the influence and power that they can exercise

By the time our Palaver was concluded, the sun was well up in the heavens and, as we had a long drive before us, we now took leave of the *Omanhene* and the Queen-Mother and returned to the rest-house to prepare for our departure I found the servants engaged on their melancholy task of sorting out Alice's loads from amongst mine and storing them away on the lorry that was to accompany her and the Doctor to Ejura It was here that she and I were to part, and although we knew we should meet again in four days' time, we both felt very sad at the thought of this temporary break in our delightful and close companionship

It was long past nine o'clock before we started on our journey to Wenchi, our way lay through the forest, and though the road was rough and in some places suspiciously soft and swampy, I am glad to say we met with no accidents or delays The drive was delicious in the forest, and comparatively cool, as the trees almost met over our heads and gave us a welcome relief from the piercing rays of the sun I wonder what is the secret of the curious fascination of these West African forests Is it the mystery of the



PALACE AT NKO ANKA, ASHANTI



PALACE AT EKIMAN, A SHANTI



unknown that lies concealed behind that impenetrable wall of jungle, or is it that dense silence brooding over all which grips and holds one's imagination prisoner ? I cannot explain it , it is as unfathomable as its beauty

The only signs of life we saw during the first part of our drive were clouds and clouds of butterflies It sounds like travellers' tales when I tell you I had to keep on brushing them aside, as they were so numerous that I could not see the road These butterflies were not very large—about the size of our Red Admiral—nor were they very brilliant , some were just a lovely shade of soft " pastel " blue and others dove-coloured

When we reached the boundary of the Wenchī district, we were received by Mr Hobbs, the Provincial Commissioner On inquiry why Mr O K Jones (the District Commissioner) had not come to meet us, Mr Hobbs told H E that the reason for his absence was that he was desperately ill with malaria, and that he (Mr Hobbs) had motored nearly a hundred and seventy miles the preceding night and early morning to try to find a doctor for him I asked whether, under the circumstances, we ought to carry out the original plan of lunching at his bungalow, and pointed out that we seemed to be rather a large party to invade the house of a dangerously sick man But Mr Hobbs assured me that if we abandoned our visit the disappointment to Mr Jones would do him more harm than our presence, so we continued on our way to the bungalow and our lunch

The bungalow stands on the ridge with a glorious wide view over the forest, and is a rambling one-storied building with a veranda and a sort of kiosk-like room at the end, which has been made into a delightful sitting-room It was charmingly furnished and looked so pretty and home-like with heaps of photographs, silver ornaments, and quite a large collection of books All was beautifully arranged, and I am sure

Mr Jones must have taken endless trouble in planning every detail for our comfort. In the room prepared as my dressing-room I found an elaborate selection of Roger et Gallet's Eaux de Toilette and scented soaps, which was a welcome change from the hygienic carbolic tablets that have hitherto been offered me during these temporary halts.

After Decima and I had finished sampling all these highly appreciated luxuries, we rejoined the rest of the party, and while we were waiting for lunch, I went and sat with the poor invalid. I doubt whether this was a very wise proceeding from the medical point of view, but it seemed to give him enormous pleasure, not only to see some one recently out from home, but to hear all about our marvellous trek. His temperature was normal and he said he was better, though feeling desperately sick. I wonder whether it may not have been a very bad sunstroke, in addition to a touch of malaria.

All the chairs being commandeered for the luncheon table, the only thing he could offer me to sit on was a wooden case, but such a trifling incident as using a box instead of a chair is of no importance in this country. I had a long and interesting talk with him about his district and many other matters, and once again I must make use of the commonplace remark that the world is a very small place. O K Jones's father (who died about three weeks ago) was Canon and Precentor of Chichester, and he showed me over Chichester Cathedral when I went there just after the War on Y M C A business.

I went back and sat with Mr Jones again after lunch. He is going home on special leave as soon as he is fit to travel and has promised to bring me back a parrot. At first he asked me to accept his own bird, which kind offer I felt bound to refuse, as I did not like to deprive him of his pet, but after I had said



good-bye and was just getting into the motor, something compelled me to ask Captain Puckridge to run back and tell him I would love to have his parrot after all, and he gave it me with joy. My change of mind caused a slight delay in our departure, for I asked the Governor to wait until my new possession was fixed up in some sort of travelling box, and this being accomplished, Polly, with many squawks and protests, joined the party. I have christened him "Wench" in remembrance of my visit.

We reached Sunyani early this afternoon. It is a lovely place, right on the edge of the forest, and the bungalows stand back on quite a steep hill about a mile from the town. Decima and I are sharing the same bungalow, which is the Provincial Commissioner's, and a large and roomy one. This time I am in the mess hut, and all our meals are served over here. Part of the veranda is used by the Staff as their sitting-room, so, to give some sort of privacy to my end of the veranda, Mr Hobbs has hung up an enormous Union Jack as a curtain, which is very patriotic, but quite transparent.

I have just returned from a most beautiful walk, with the two District Commissioners, Captain Lynch and Mr Judd, and Captain Puckridge as my escort. Decima was too tired to join us and preferred to potter about in the garden with Mr Hobbs, but we started forth after tea intent on real solid exercise, and walked up to the little town, which we found in a terrific state of enthusiasm at the arrival of the Governor and his large party.

It was really a very interesting and instructive expedition. We began by invading a native house, as Captain Lynch considered it a necessary part of my education that I should see for myself the home life of an Ashanti family, and entering a narrow doorway, we found ourselves in what I might describe as a small courtyard, open to the sky in the centre, with

a raised platform running right round it and the roof projecting into the middle, all the domestic work takes place in this open square, the platform serving as their living-room. Everything was very clean and fresh, but cocks and hens and dogs were wandering in and out amongst plump and cheerful babies and small children. I was hugely interested in their cooking arrangements and produced much laughter and amusement by insisting on inspecting the contents of their cooking-pots. I asked them, by means of signs and smiles, to explain to me the art of preparing fu-fu.<sup>1</sup>

Our visit had caused a mild excitement in the town and in one second the entire population of Sunyani was attempting to get into this small house, merely to watch what we were doing inside, and we had some difficulty in making our way back into the street. The Ashantis are wonderfully courteous and civil, and though they displayed the deepest interest in our doings, there was nothing approaching mobbing or vulgar curiosity on their part.

Even in the olden days their beautiful manners were always commented on by travellers. About a hundred years ago a merchant named James Swanzy, when making a report to a Committee of the House of Commons on West Africa, referred to the Ashantis in the following terms:

"It is a singular thing that these people—the Ashantees—who had never seen a white man nor the sea, were the most civil and well-bred people that I have ever seen in Africa. It is astonishing to see men with such few opportunities so well behaved."

It is rather remarkable that this old trader, over a hundred years ago, should lay stress on the Ashantis being so well bred. I have been immensely struck by the air of high breeding among the chiefs and queen-mothers I have met. The latter have, without exception, the most beautiful hands and feet you can imagine,

<sup>1</sup> The national food of the Ashantis



THE ROUND HOUSE IUKA ASHANTI



THE ST. LUNGAOW IUKA ASHANTI



## LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST 165

with very slim and delicately made wrists and ankles, while another noticeable feature, among men and women alike, are their ears, which are small, beautifully shaped, and lying perfectly flat against the head

\* \* \* \* \*

*May 26*

I broke off my letter rather suddenly last night, as it was very late and I had to dress for dinner

The day ended with an appalling tornado, which really was disastrous. We had had such a cheery evening. Mr Hobbs produced a gramophone and some splendid records, ordered specially out from home in honour of our visit, and though, of course, mosquito boots are not the pleasantest of things to dance in, and the floor of the veranda might have been smoother, neither of these trifles interfered with our enjoyment, and we were having great fun, when that ominous rush of wind began, to be followed by terrific thunder and deluges of rain.

Everything was swamped, and at one moment I thought the house itself would collapse over our heads. As the rain seemed likely to continue most of the night, the Governor and Staff decided to struggle back to their bungalows, so we began dressing them up in all sorts of strange garments to keep them dry. It was an odd-looking party that sallied forth into the wildest night of storm and rain I have yet met with on the Coast. No one seemed any the worse this morning for the soaking last night, but the mackintosh has yet to be invented that can keep out such torrential rain as that accompanying a West African tornado.

H E held his Palaver this morning at eight o'clock, it was full of thrills, and the Omanhene of Wani presented me with the most beautiful miniature stool of pure gold.

The presentation ceremony—which took place at the conclusion of the Palaver—was most interesting

The Omanhene rose from his stool and advanced towards me, his state umbrella being carried over his head, and his sub-chiefs, elders, linguists, and the rest of his large retinue, escorting him up to the dais where I was seated. They all moved forward very slowly and with great solemnity, the Chief in the centre, and his suite forming as it were two wings on either side, keeping the horseshoe formation which they always observe out here. The sunlight shimmering on their wonderful golden rods of office and their many chains and ornaments made a beautiful sight. The Chief's cloth was carried by two of his attendants, rather in the same way as you may see the priest's chasuble carried at Mass. When they reached me, the Omanhene stepped forward and, through his linguist, begged my acceptance of the stool of pure gold "as a token of remembrance."

The little stool was then presented on a cushion of dark green velvet. I took it in my hand and thanked him through the interpreter, declaring I would for ever value this gift as a mark of their loyalty and goodwill. By some lucky inspiration I replaced the stool on its cushion, and, by a still luckier inspiration, laid it down on its side instead of standing it up, both these actions were ceremonially correct. The reason for the latter action is so well and quaintly described by Captain Rattray that I must quote it.

"An Ashanti, when rising from his stool, will generally tilt it up against the wall or lay it on its side, lest a departed spirit wandering round should sit on it, when the next one to sit down 'would contract pains in his waist'."

When the little ceremony was over, the Omanhene and his followers retired from my presence in the same formation, moving slowly backwards.

You can't think how proud I am to possess a golden stool all of my own.

Altogether I have had the most eventful day in the

way of "dash," because Captain Lynch gave me the silver key with which I ought to have unlocked the barrier opening up the new Sunyani-Kumasi road. The key, which is solid silver, lies in a solid silver box, and rests on a tiny piece of silken Ashanti cloth. The whole is native workmanship, beautifully carried out.

This afternoon another parrot appeared to keep Wenchu company, which I am calling "Sunyani." They are both seated in their cages on the table, making an awful mess with their corn-cobs and squawking lustily. I have been promised some more parrots. What will you say to all the strange things I have gathered up during this journey?

I have been for a marvellous walk in the forest this evening, too beautiful to describe, and in the course of our walk came upon a little enclosure in the centre of which was the solitary grave of a young Englishman. The sight of that grave made me desperately sad: it seemed so lonely and far away from home, but it was beautifully tended and cared for. The Ashantis treat our graves with the greatest veneration, and regard the care of them as a great honour.

The Governor has gone down with a sharp attack of malaria. Is it not unfortunate? As we are obliged to leave to-morrow, he has wisely retired to bed, I suppose his fever is due to the soaking he got last night.

In one of my earlier letters I mentioned the old traveller Bowdich, and the astonishing book he wrote in the year 1819 about this country. We have discovered a wonderful first edition of it in this bungalow, full of coloured plates, it really is most interesting, not to say thrilling, to read out here his description of his "Mission to Ashantee," and it is so remarkable to find that the ceremonies he witnessed, more than a century ago, are precisely the same as those in which we have been taking part, except that human sacrifices have been abolished.

168    LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST

I will try and write more from Ejura, but now I must stop as I must go and pack    Good night

EJURA

*May 27*

The first half of our great tour is nearly over, and to-morrow we return to Kumasi, after a month's absence, with no one any the worse for all our strenuous travelling and adventures

We left Sunyani early this morning, the Governor better, but still rather shaky    We stopped at Awuruwa for breakfast and then continued our journey to this enchanting place, with the inevitable halts at the more important villages to receive the chiefs assembled to greet us as we passed through their districts

At Tekiman the Omanhene presented me with a gold ring and a huge elephant's tusk    His letter asking the Governor to give me these gifts will amuse you    Here it is

" TEKIMAN,

*May 27, 1925*

YOUR EXCELLENCY,

Tekiman-hene pass through you his presents 1 (one) Elephant Tusk and 1 (one) Gold Ring to offer to Princess Mary Lewis for future remembrance

I have the honour to be

Sir

Your obedient servant

YAO KRAMO his

+ mark

Omanhene of Tekiman

Western Provinces Ashanti

Witness to mark

HENRY B ADDA

Tribunal Reg<sup>r</sup> "



## LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST 169

Shortly before we reached Nkoranza we met Captain and Mrs Wilkinson, who had motored in from Kintampo to meet us and report on the state of the roads. To my joy she produced a parrot for me (this now makes my third), which is a darling, quite young, perfectly tame and very friendly. It journeyed on with us to Ejura sitting quite happily on the chauffeur's shoulder.

We arrived here in time for lunch, but, alas, it was wet and misty. I ought to tell you that the rainy season is just beginning, so far the rains are not very heavy, but, of course, everything one possesses is wringing wet, and there are no drying-rooms for one's clothes in the bush.

Decima and the Governor are living in the District Commissioner's bungalow, while my quarters are the Round House, right away on the very edge of the forest, where it is very peaceful and quiet.

The rain has stopped now, and as the mists lift and melt away, the most marvellous view is unfolding itself before my eyes. Limitless miles of forest stretching away to a faint blur of hills on the distant horizon. Ejura is of such surpassing beauty and charm that I know I shall always fail in attempting to describe it.

But there is a slight drawback to this otherwise perfect round house. Only one part of it is sun-proof, and I am therefore obliged to put on my helmet each time I walk across to the unprotected half of the hut, it is very odd how everything I need most is always sure to be on that side.

A glorious surprise occurred after lunch when the mail arrived. I could scarcely believe my eyes when the Private Secretary appeared with a huge bundle of letters and papers and declared they were all for me.

\* \* \* \* \*

I am just recovering from a blissful hour spent in reading my budget from home. There were two more

of your delightful letters from Rome and one written just after your return to London

It seems so strange to picture you immersed in your daily round of work and functions, and all those endless committees. Out here I feel so completely aloof from London, and sometimes wonder how I shall ever fit into it all again. This wonderful roving life is so absolutely what I love best, I shall miss its freedom and irresponsibility, and, above all, the delightful simplicity of our daily existence. Life on the Coast strikes one as much simpler and more direct, here one is brought face to face with stern reality, and there is no room or time for those trifles that seem so supremely important to us at home.

But this trek has taught me many things, and not the least amongst them is to appreciate in an extraordinary degree what the word work means out here. It is impossible to travel as I have done all these past weeks, in daily contact with those who are responsible for the administration of this Colony, and not to realize the never-ending demands that are made on their endurance, and their splendid, loyal response to the call of duty.

Take, for instance, the life of a District Commissioner. He combines the duties of road-maker, bridge-builder, lawyer, doctor, accountant and architect, in fact, he is father and mother to those entrusted to his care, his district varies from four to five thousand square miles, and months and months may pass for him without the sight of another white face. We cannot even begin to know what loneliness these men have to endure, and yet they love their work and their district, and are beloved and trusted in return by those for whom they labour so unceasingly.

Personally speaking, I can never express how profoundly touched I have been by the thoughtfulness and consideration shown to me by all those responsible



PALAYER AT MAMPON VSHANLI



## LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST 171

for my comfort on this trek. You will have gathered from my letters what inadequate means the District Commissioners must have had at their disposal to make any luxurious preparations for my visits, and yet how much they did, I realized it in countless little details of which they probably thought I was quite unaware.

### KUMASI

*May 28*

It seems like a dream to be back at the Residency and in such luxury—electric light, electric fans, clean water to wash in, soft carpets to walk on and comfortable arm-chairs to rest in, lovely flowers everywhere. In fact we are once more in civilization, and though I am appreciating it all to the full, I yearn to be back in my little hut at Ejura. I think the whole party was sorry not to be able to spend another day there. I shall never be weary of the forest and am completely under its spell.

This morning, having wakened at dawn, I got up at once and threw open my shutters, to watch the sunrise. It was so wonderful that I determined to go for a walk, so I pulled on my high boots, slipped into a rain-coat, and then cautiously lifted the "tatties" that hung over the doorway to see whether I could get out unobserved.

All was quiet and there was not a sign of anyone stirring in camp, the sentry did not even pause on his beat, but merely gazed at me in blank astonishment as I crept out into the open. My five parrots (two more Pollies arrived yesterday morning), however, squeaked and fluttered uneasily in their cages, as if to mark their disapproval of this extraordinary apparition. Beautiful and wonderful as this early walk was, it did not last very long, by the time I had gone

about fifty yards, and even before I had actually penetrated into the forest, I was soaking wet in the long grass that reached nearly up to my knees, so I returned to my hut, perched myself on the little window-sill and re-read my mail until Malam came in with my early tea

It was really a great grief to me to have to pack up and say farewell to Ejura. It will always have a very special place in my affections, for, quite apart from its beauty, it was my first experience of the "bush," and came as a revelation of what life away in the forest must be. I shall never forget the impression it made upon me.

We had a very early breakfast, and then started off down that same wonderful road to Mampon over which we had passed just a month previously. On reaching Mampon, we motored direct to Captain Rattray's bungalow, where he entertained Decima and myself, while the Governor went to select a site for the District Commissioner's new bungalow, it having been decided to abandon beautiful Ejura and transfer the District Commissioner's head-quarters to Mampon instead. It does seem a sad pity to give up that lovely place, and I cannot bear to think of it all deserted and empty, but the authorities consider Mampon more practical as being in the centre of the District.

H E rejoined us in about an hour's time and then took me to see the large Trade School, which was very interesting. I was enormously struck with the extremely practical and useful training that is being given to the African in these admirable schools.

We reached Kumasi about 12.30, and drove straight to the Residency. When still quite a little distance from the house I could already see Alice waving her welcome to me, and Mr Maxwell standing next to her, his face beaming with pleasure at our safe return. Almost before the motor stopped I jumped out to

## LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST 173

greet Alice, and there was so much to say and relate, so many questions to ask and answer, that we hardly knew where to begin. At length I escaped upstairs to my room, where another joyful welcome awaited me from Annie,<sup>1</sup> who had come up yesterday from Accra and stays here with me during the next few days until we start off on the second half of our tour.

I am so thankful that Alice is really much better, and the Doctor's report very comforting and satisfactory, but, to use a Coast expression, she has orders to go "softly, softly."

Another mail has just come in, two mails in two days is an unheard-of and undeserved luxury, and you cannot expect me to write when an unopened mail from home is lying on my table. I told you my letters were rather like a three-volume novel, so I end with "To be continued in our next."

KUMASI

*May 29.*

There seems to be no limit to the wonders of this tour, each day brings some new interest and thrill. At 7.30 this morning Alice, Captain Puckridge and I motored to Bosomtwe, the sacred lake of the Ashantis which lies about twenty miles to the south of Kumasi. It is five miles round and nearly two miles across, practically circular, and lies in a hollow with steep, forest-clad hills surrounding it, rising to a height of six or seven hundred feet, there are quite a number of little villages dotted along the shore.

Bosomtwe has some strange features, one being that although several small streams run into it, none flow out, nor has it been possible to gauge its tremendous depth, which has been roughly estimated at five hundred feet. The lake is held sacred by the Ashantis,

<sup>1</sup> Annie Picknett, my maid

and there are innumerable rites and customs associated with it, but the men of the present generation are not quite so punctilious as they should be in these matters and cause much distress to the old lake-dwellers, who fear that the modern neglect of ceremonial observances will offend the lake spirit, and that, being hurt in his feelings, he will deny his gifts to the faithful

But though they may feel inclined to disregard or omit some of the ceremonies, there are certain taboos which no Ashanti will dare to ignore. No one, for instance, may take a boat on to the waters of this sacred lake, nor may they use iron fish-hooks, fish-lines, Seine nets, or cast nets. As Bosomtwe abounds with the most excellent fish, this might present serious difficulties were the Ashantis not full of resource. As it is, instead of boats they float on logs, on which they lie face downwards, paddling with their hands with extraordinary rapidity. They net their fish in an ingenious kind of trap made from mats of plaited reed, these mats, instead of lying on the bottom of the lake, are fastened into a floating square frame of bamboo. This frame is kept in place by means of heavy weights lashed to its four corners. As with our lobster-pots and eel-traps, this contrivance is left out with the mouth open for some considerable time, until the native calculates that it is probably full of fish, he then swims noiselessly up to it and tows the whole thing, with its wriggling victims, to shore.

I have been told of yet another method of fishing in this the native dives under the water, remaining submerged for about half a minute, and on rising to the surface appears with a fish in his mouth. No one has told me how he secures his prize.

There exists a curious belief that disaster will attend those who cross the lake in a direct line, paddling in zigzag fashion, or round the edge, does not seem to





BOSONTWE (THE SACRED LAKE), ASHANTI



hurt them, but were they to attempt to float straight across the centre, rumour has it that they would be seized by a huge monster living in the depths of the lake, or else be engulfed in a whirlpool. Another, older legend tells that Bosomtwe was not always where it is now, but was originally situated close to the Bosomtwe Rock in Northern Ashanti. There is still a big depression in that neighbourhood, filled with tropical vegetation, but without a trace of water. The reason why Bosomtwe left its old home was due to a quarrel with its brother, they appear to have disagreed so violently that the lake departed in a huff to take up its permanent residence where we visited it this morning.

The charming little rest-house stands high up, overlooking the lake, and it was here we intended spending a quiet morning, but we were refused admittance by the stern caretaker, who informed us with great dignity and importance that the rest-house was reserved all that day for "The Princess and the Governor". In vain did Captain Puckridge explain that I was the Princess and had every right to take possession of the rest-house; he refused to believe it. At length we were allowed to enter, but still he eyed us with deep suspicion, until the Queen-Mother of the district arrived with many attendants and a large "dash" of eggs, chickens and yams for me; then, after watching the deferential manner in which she greeted me and presented her gifts, he began to think better of these strange interlopers, and, suddenly calling for additional help, started cleaning with great vigour and much turpentine the very floors under our feet.

We wandered about and explored the bush, scrambling half-way down a precipitous path that leads to the water's edge, and then, returning to the rest-house, spent the remainder of the morning resting in comfortable long chairs on the veranda, Alice and I

telling each other of our various experiences during the last four days. But it was getting towards noon, the heat was great, and there were twenty miles between us and Kumasi. Wherever one may be, the moment of departure comes all too soon, and here in beautiful Ashanti it is always time to say farewell when I am most enjoying myself.

You might think that our lovely expedition this morning would have been enough for one day's pleasure, but no. At lunch Mr Maxwell asked whether I would like to motor into the forest after tea, and having accepted with joy, I started off, with him and Captain Puckridge in attendance, at about 4.30.

He suggested driving out to Nkawee, the village where the Golden Stool of Ashanti is said to have been found in 1921. This, I fear, will not convey very much to you, so I will relapse once more into my best guide-book style and give you a short account of the history and importance of this marvellous Stool.

The first King who made the Ashantis into a really great people was Osai Tutu, who is supposed to have reigned from about 1700 to 1730. His extraordinary power and influence over the nation is said to have been entirely due to the Golden Stool, which, according to tradition, descended from the skies during his reign. At this time Kumasi was governed by Ntim Gyakari, King of Denkyira, who had a clansman known as Anotchi (the Priest). Owing to some little trouble between him and one of the King's wives, this Anotchi had to fly the country, and having settled down in a remote district and devoted himself to the study of fetish lore and medicine, he gained the reputation of being the wisest medicine-man Ashanti had ever known.

After a time Anotchi came back to Ashanti and told Akrasa, who was on the Stool of Juaben, that he had been entrusted by the Sky God to transform the Ashantis into a strong and famous race. Osai Tutu, hearing

of Anotchi's mysterious mission, held an enormous Palaver at Kumasi, at which all the Queen-Mothers and high dignitaries were present. Anotchi was summoned to this Palaver, and there in the sight of the vast assembly he brought the Golden Stool down from a dense black cloud amidst strange thunderings, the whole air being filled with fine white dust.

The Stool, which was made of wood, partly overlaid with gold, fell on the King's knees instead of on the ground, and Anotchi then told the King and the whole assembly that it enshrined the soul of the whole people of Ashanti further, that it contained their health, their courage, their strength, and in fact all their well-being, and that if harm befell it through loss or destruction, so surely would the greatness and prosperity of the Ashanti people wane and die. No one ever sat upon the Golden Stool, not even the King himself, nor was it allowed to touch the ground. It rested on a specially woven cloth, under which was spread part of an elephant's skin. On very ceremonial occasions it was carried in procession under its own state umbrella, the King following behind it, and his retinue was far inferior in number and splendour to those in attendance on the Golden Stool. From this very abbreviated account of the Stool's origin you will learn something of its enormous importance and the veneration with which it is regarded by the Ashanti.

When Prempeh was deported, in 1895, the Golden Stool was taken away and hidden with the other regalia, as the people considered the loss of their king to be of less importance than the possibility of their being deprived of the treasure which contained their soul. In 1900, when they imagined that danger threatened it once more, they broke out into open rebellion, and even when peace was restored, the whereabouts of the Golden Stool still remained a profound mystery.

It was in 1921 that this jealously guarded secret

was unearthed, when a gang of road-menders came upon it quite by chance while working on a new road in the Nkoranza district. Of course the Stool was removed at once by the Ashantis and once more hidden away, but the two chiefs to whom the guardianship of this precious emblem was entrusted began stripping it of its golden ornaments and offering them for sale. They were recognized by an old Ashanti woman at Kumasi, who reported the matter, and the two thieving chiefs were arrested. The Chief Commissioner, Mr Harper,<sup>1</sup> assembled all the Kumasi chiefs and told them that the Government did not intend to put forward any claim whatsoever to the Golden Stool and that he was going to hand over the two offenders to the chiefs for trial. When the trial took place, they were condemned to death, but the sentence was commuted to exile and imprisonment.

The Ashantis are now the sole guardians of the Golden Stool, and its hiding-place is once more wrapped in profound mystery. It is due to Mr Harper's wonderfully wise and diplomatic action in refusing to have anything to do with the Stool or the thieves that the incident passed off so quietly, as it might easily have led to serious trouble.

After this long dissertation you will smile when I tell you that we motored thirty-five miles there and thirty-five miles back without having discovered the actual village where the Stool was found. We asked several times, but the villagers displayed the most astounding ignorance in the matter. But, although we failed in the object of our expedition, it was a wonderful drive. Mr Maxwell is the most charming guide and companion you could possibly desire, not only has he an extensive knowledge of Ashanti, but also a great affection for, and understanding of, its people,

<sup>1</sup> Mr C N Harper, C M G, O B E, is now Governor of St Helena.

## LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST 179

and possesses that perfect gift of being able to impart his information in a most delightful manner

It was dark when we reached home, and we found the Governor's tennis party just breaking up

*Whit Sunday, May 31*

I was so busy yesterday that there was no time to add anything to my daily letter I began my day by going to church at 6 30

Our Church of England Mission is under the care of the Anglican Order of Benedictine Monks from Pershore, in Worcestershire, you may remember Father Peter (their Superior out here) came to see me in London just before I sailed The Church is dedicated to St Cyprian, and is a very unpretentious building, but, unlike the Church at Accra, built on the right lines for the tropics and open to every breeze As the Mission is terribly poor, and the all-important work must be carried on, the body of the Church on weekdays is shut off from the Sanctuary and used as a school It is really awful the way we starve our Church

It was a wonderful revelation to see how keen and earnest these African Christians are the Church was more than half full even at this early hour, and I was struck by the devout and reverent behaviour of the congregation As I have already told you, an Ashanti always uncovers his left shoulder and removes his sandals in the presence of one of high rank, and it was an impressive sight to see each man, on reaching the entrance to the Sanctuary, perform this ceremony before actually approaching the altar-rails to receive the Blessed Sacrament, thus literally obeying the command, "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground"<sup>1</sup>

My prie-Dieu was an Ashanti Stool, covered with a

<sup>1</sup> Exodus iii 5

silken native cloth, and on it lay a small bunch of pink monthly roses. A young Ashanti "dashes" Father Martin with flowers every morning, and, hearing that I was to be present, asked whether he might give them to me instead.

After service we hurried back to breakfast and returned to the Mission later in the morning, as I was anxious to gain an insight into the splendid work of these Missionary Fathers.

In addition to their school, they have a Theological Training College for African Priests. Father Martin and Father Francis received me, and we made an exhaustive tour of inspection. I went into the school and listened to some really excellent singing by the scholars, amongst whom was the young Omanhene of Wenchi. The work and influence of these Benedictines is beyond all praise, they are so self-sacrificing and courageous, and yet, with all their saintliness, so absolutely human and full of common sense. One might imagine that as monks they would be out of touch with the problems of everyday life, but this is far from being the case. I only wish that their Community could spare many more Priests for Africa like these teachers of the Christian Faith at St Cyprian's, Kumasi.

The rest of the morning I spent with Annie reviewing the wreckage of my wardrobe.

For the afternoon another lovely expedition with Mr Maxwell had been planned for me, this time to the Wono, or Fetish Rock. Once more we drove through the forest, passing through rich cocoa plantations and quaint little villages, and on reaching the wonderful rock, we got out and scrambled to the summit, from which we watched the sun set, while Mr Maxwell taught me many things about Ashanti in its olden days.

No one seems to have discovered who were the original inhabitants of Ashanti or where they came from, but it is certain that these dense forests must





THE RIVER TRAH ASHANTI



THE TRAH ASHANTI



M T IN HER HAMMOCK AT OJIASI ASHANTI



have been inhabited from very early days, because on this rock are to be seen the grooves made by the sharpening of stone implements. We had a long discussion as to whether the Stone Age out here corresponded with our own. There still exist a quantity of stone implements, commonly known as "God's axes" or "God's hoes," which the natives believe came from the sky and which they endow with the supernatural powers of the Sky God.

On our return home we found that, while we had been delving into the Stone Age, the Residency had been very gay and festive, a big cricket match had taken place, and this was to be followed in the evening by an official dinner and a dance.

I must tell you of an incident which took place during dinner that touched me very much. After "The King" had been drunk and the Governor had proposed the health of Mr Maxwell, Decima suddenly rose to her feet and asked H E's permission to speak, and then, in a beautiful speech, she welcomed me to Kumasi in her own name and that of the women of Ashanti. I really cannot repeat all the charming and undeservedly kind remarks she made about me, and, being quite overwhelmed at this unexpected tribute, I fear my reply was very halting and inadequate. After all, what could I say except "Thank you"?

As the next day was Sunday, our party broke up shortly before midnight.

Whit-Sunday at St Cyprian's was wonderful, and I was supremely happy. Perhaps you do not realize that yesterday was the first time I have been inside a church for over a month, as the Northern Territories only possess one, that of the White Fathers at the Roman Catholic Mission at Navarongo. Don't think this means that the Coast lacks Missions, for there are plenty there, and the Wesleyan and Scottish Missions are doing excellent work.

We have had such a bitter disappointment Decima was to have held a reception this afternoon at four, and the band had already arrived and some of the guests were coming up the drive, when a terrific tornado broke. The rain came down in the usual deluge, everything was swamped, and there was no chance of a party. It really was a pity, for though I met all the officials and many of the ladies on my first visit to Kumasi, I have had no further opportunity of making their acquaintance. For a time we hoped against hope that the weather would clear, but the rain and storm continued without mercy till dusk, when it was too late for any kind of party. When at last the rain ceased, we walked across to call on Captain Norris, from where I have just returned. It is now a perfect evening and difficult to believe that only an hour ago there was such a raging storm.

I have had so much to tell you of all our doings that I have omitted to mention the sad news that greeted us on our arrival on Thursday. Poor O. K. Jones, our kind host at Wenchi, developed blackwater fever on the evening after we left him, and though he is putting up a gallant fight, to-day's report is so serious that there is little hope of his recovery. This has cast quite a shadow over what is otherwise an extremely happy visit. Father Martin, at St. Cyprian's, is a great friend of his, and when I told him this morning how ill he was, started off on a hundred-and-forty-mile drive in his not very reliable Ford car to visit him. I only hope he may get there in time.<sup>1</sup>

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*

*June 1*

My last day at Kumasi. We go straight to the train from the dance that the Regiment is giving to-night in

<sup>1</sup> The car broke down time after time and it took Father Martin three days to reach Wenchi.

## LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST 183

my honour , and I hear it has been decided that we are to spend the next two days in the train, visiting the goldfields *en route* for Tarkwa, where we are due on Wednesday evening

I have had a very busy morning First of all I visited the European Hospital, of which there is really nothing to say, as it is similar to the one at Accra just a comfortable bungalow, with a broad airy veranda Dr Duff, one of my fellow-passengers on board the "Aba," received me with the Senior Nursing Sister and the rest of the staff The nurses' quarters are in a separate bungalow close by

I then went and inspected the Native Hospital, and from there drove to the historic Fort, the scene of so many memorable events in the history of Kumasi

The Ashanti rebellion in 1900 was so overshadowed by the South African War that many people at home paid but slight attention to it, thinking of it as just another of those "little wars" to which we have grown so accustomed during the long and costly process of building up this vast Empire But if you had time to read an account of what took place during that "little war," you would be overwhelmed by its tale of unsurpassed heroism and endurance The events which led up to that rebellion are so involved and interwoven with the history of the Golden Stool that I dare not attempt to touch on them , but I will give you a very brief outline of the actual siege

In March 1900 Sir Frederic Hodgson, the Governor of the Gold Coast, was touring the Colony with Lady Hodgson and, not having visited Kumasi, decided to include that place in his journey Judging by outward appearances his tour was a success, as he was received everywhere with great friendliness, and on arriving at the Fort in Kumasi, a large number of Ashanti chiefs came out in full state to welcome him All the time, however, there was a strong undercurrent

of discontent in the country, and the Ashantis were to a certain extent already organizing themselves for open rebellion

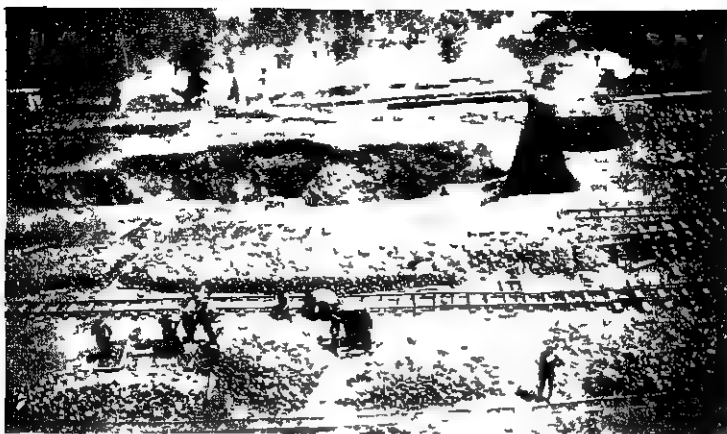
By degrees it dawned on the Governor and his Staff that serious trouble was brewing, and it was considered advisable to wire to the Coast for reinforcements. Shortly afterwards, when Captain Armitage, of the Gold Coast Constabulary, who was Private Secretary to Sir Frederic Hodgson, was sent out with a small military escort to discover the whereabouts of the Golden Stool, he and his party were ambushed, and after a short fight compelled to retire. In this fight both himself and Captain Leggett (also of the Gold Coast Constabulary), who accompanied him, were wounded.

The next serious event was the attack on the Basel Mission, when the missionaries fled to the Fort for protection, and several of their servants were killed.

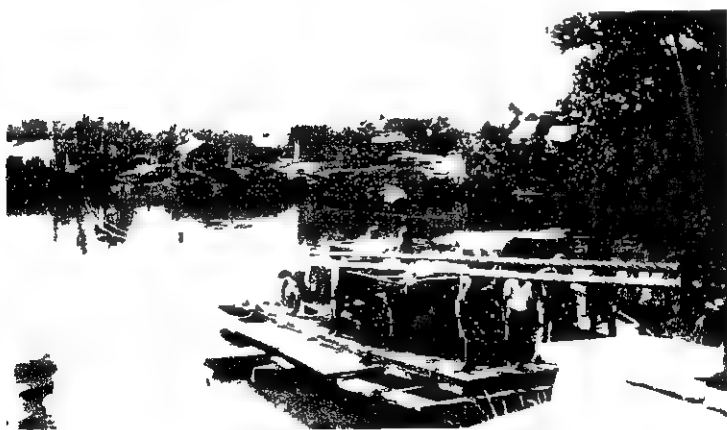
By now there was no disguising the fact that the Ashantis were determined ~~on~~ war with us. They assaulted and captured several villages, and killed many of the traders and friendly natives, and thousands of terrified refugees came crowding for help to the Fort, which, alas, was too small to take them all in. Camps were therefore organized underneath the walls for these unfortunate people, and in order to provide them with some sort of protection, cordons of troops were drawn round them, all the outlying buildings, except the Fort itself, being now in the hands of the rebels.

I must not forget to mention that the chiefs of Mampon, Aguna, Nsuta, Juabin and Nkwanta came over to our side and remained absolutely loyal throughout the whole of this terrible time.

The Ashantis only made one really determined attempt to capture the Fort, and in this met with such heavy losses that they decided never again to face the white man in open fight. But as time went on, the



MANGANESE MINE AT INSULA ASHANTI



CROSSING THE I RAH





conditions of the besieged garrison became more and more serious. Two small relief columns had reached Kumasi and had to be quartered inside the Fort, and as they had practically no food or ammunition, you can realize that their arrival only added to the desperate straits of their comrades.

One's imagination refuses to take in the indescribable horrors of that siege, in which no less than three thousand refugees, men, women and children, were crowded together round the walls. Smallpox and all kinds of sickness broke out amongst them and, combined with starvation, brought the death-rate up to between thirty and forty a day. The survivors were far too weak to bury their dead, and left the corpses where they lay. To add to their misery the rainy season had set in.

Inside the Fort conditions were nearly as hopeless. The Fort is only fifty yards square, and in it were seven hundred and fifty native troops of all ranks and thirty Europeans, including four women. The question of food was becoming daily more difficult, and their rations were at the lowest ebb, parrots, dogs, and domestic pets of all sorts having long since been converted into food, even the supply of lizards was giving out, while a rat fetched 10s.

I am copying out a list that has been shown me, which gives some of the prices charged during the siege.

A small spoonful of whisky 2s  
 A box of matches 2s  
 A 7 lb tin of flour £3  
 A 2 lb tin of beef £2 16s  
 Biscuits 10s each  
 One red pepper 3d

This will give you some idea of the state to which they were reduced. But, in spite of their own sufferings, the Europeans organized a soup-kitchen and fed two hundred children every morning with "soup."

prepared from biscuit crumbs and scraps of their own starvation ration boiled up with water

By June 23 there were only three and a half days' supply for the entire garrison. A Council of War was held, and they decided that, as it was humanly impossible for the whole force to exist on that limited amount of food, the Governor and as many as were fit to walk should make a dash for liberty, leaving three English officers, one native officer, one hundred and nine Hausas and twenty-five carriers to hold the Fort. One hundred and sixty rounds of ammunition per man and the minimum amount for the five machine-guns and four 7-pounders were all that could be spared to defend Kumasi.

On Saturday evening (June 23), the Governor, at the head of a column of starving and emaciated people, broke out from the Fort. The column was composed of about twenty-six Europeans, including the four ladies, six hundred rank and file, seven hundred carriers and one thousand refugees. Though harried on all sides by the enemy, wearied and worn and practically starving, this gallant little force eventually reached the Coast in three weeks' time.

The three Englishmen left to defend the Fort were Captain Bishop, Gold Coast Constabulary, Mr Ralph, Lagos Constabulary, and Dr Hay, Medical Officer, the latter being ill with malaria. Their meagre amount of food was gradually reduced, and at last a small cupful of linseed meal and a two-inch cube of preserved meat was all they could allow themselves as their daily ration. I told you, in my first letter from Kumasi, of the despairing message that Captain Bishop sent on a flimsy piece of cigarette paper, asking for help. Two native soldiers volunteered to try to get through the enemy lines with it, though they knew that the attempt meant almost certain death, and though so weak they could barely stand, these two heroes started on this

perilous quest for help. One actually succeeded in reaching the relieving column, but the other must have been killed at once, for he was never heard of again.

On July 14, when the last rations had been eaten, they decided to cut their way out under cover of night, each man for himself. The three Englishmen determined to stick together and to die rather than be taken alive.

But a miracle happened, for, on that very day, distant firing was reported, which must surely mean that the long looked for deliverance was at hand. It was not, however, till the next afternoon that Colonel Willcocks<sup>1</sup> actually reached the Fort, when he saw the gate open and those three indomitable Englishmen march out, followed by those of their loyal native troops who had still sufficient strength to walk. The siege had lasted eighty-one days.

\* \* \* \* \*

Before describing my own visit to the Fort, I must tell you of the wonderful part the Queen-Mother of Mampon played during those terrible months. It will come as a welcome relief after all the harrowing details you have just been reading, and is another instance of the enormous power and influence possessed by these royal ladies.

The Head Chief, or King, of Mampon had gone in to Kumasi to welcome the Governor, and during his absence the Queen-Mother was left in charge. Early in April Dr. Montgomery, Acting District Commissioner at Attabubu, dispatched £200 in specie to Kumasi, but on reaching Mampon the bearers of this treasure were told of the rebellion and warned by the Queen-Mother that they would never get through to Kumasi. She provided them with a strong escort of her own men and sent them back to Attabubu, at the same time imploring Dr. Montgomery to send troops to her assist-

<sup>1</sup> General Sir James Willcocks, G C B, G C M G, D S O, etc

ance as the rebels were using every possible means to force her people to join them, but Dr. Montgomery, having only a very small detachment, was unable to spare any troops from Attabubu, though he kept in touch with her through daily messengers. The Chief of Ejura (who was under the Queen-Mother) had already been compelled to join the rebellion, and his sub-chief, learning this, summoned all his men and prepared to do the same. When, however, Ya Bremawua, the Queen-Mother, heard of his action, she promptly ordered him back to his district, declaring that she would never consent to her people making war on the Government; and when a message from Kumasi came through, demanding powder for the enemy, she answered that she had five hundred kegs two hundred of which she had just issued to defend the remainder, and would the Ashantis like to come and fetch it?—which they wisely declined to do.

From this time onwards she ceaselessly harried the rebels by stopping all supplies of food and salt from reaching them at Kumasi, and so, again, the loyalty of one woman in great measure saved us

\*           \*           \*           \*

On my arrival at the Fort, Colonel Macdonell received me at the entrance, and I assure you it was an overwhelming experience to walk through the rooms and along the veranda that had witnessed such scenes of suffering. I could not believe that that small and totally inadequate space had housed those hundreds of people during eighty-one days, but, of course, their ranks were sadly thinned by death, and after the Governor's column had broken out, their plight was so terrible that many died from weakness as they were crawling up to receive their rations. We climbed up the steps to the bastions and I stood and wondered at the heroic defence put up by those poor starving gunners.

It is impossible to give you any real idea of what the Fort is like. One must have seen it with one's own eyes, and even then the full significance of those terrible days is difficult to grasp.

The relief is celebrated every year on July 15, which is known as "Kumasi Day." The whole Regiment and all the Government officials parade quite early in front of the Fort, after which the veteran survivors of the original garrison, about forty in number, take over the guard. All Europeans go inside the Fort, while the veterans man the walls, firing blank ammunition, and the battery fires five rounds, the gates are locked for one hour, and then the veterans march out and hand over to the Regiment.

I have been told by those who take part in this ceremony that it is impressive and moving beyond words. What must be the thoughts of those gallant old men as they stand on the same walls which they once guarded so ceaselessly night and day for the honour of the British Flag!

#### *Later*

I have just completed a delightful and entirely personal little function. Mr Maxwell was very anxious that there should be some sort of permanent record of my visit to Kumasi, and after much discussion it was agreed that I should be requested to plant a tree.

We spent a long time this morning in selecting a suitable spot, and finally decided that the important ceremony should take place after tea, beside the enormous silk-cotton tree which stands on the lawn in front of the Residency. I cannot tell you how agitated I was for fear lest the rain should spoil my little "show," but to-day has been exceptional and we have had brilliant scorching sun all the time.

At 4.30 we sallied forth armed with a most imposing array of horticultural implements for the planting of

one small tree—it was a baby silk-cotton, destined in future years to replace its huge brother. We dug and grubbed until a hole was made sufficiently large to hold the new-comer, and then Mr Hunter, of the Agricultural Department, handed me the pygmy tree, the contrast between which and its tall neighbour was positively absurd and I placed it in the ground and planted it according to all the approved rules<sup>1</sup>

After this strenuous function we had a drive, calling first on Colonel Macdonell, and then following part of the old Cape Coast road, as I wanted to pass over the same ground as Christie when he entered Kumasi.

Everything round me is in that indescribable state of confusion inseparable from packing, as all our baggage is going down to the train almost immediately. I am very sad at leaving Kumasi. It is a wonderful place, full of historical and personal memories. In a sense I also feel that I am bidding farewell to Ashanti, to its gentle courteous people with their wealth of folklore and legend, and to its beautiful forests filled with the mystery and romance of the unknown. In fact, to everything that has made my visit fascinating.

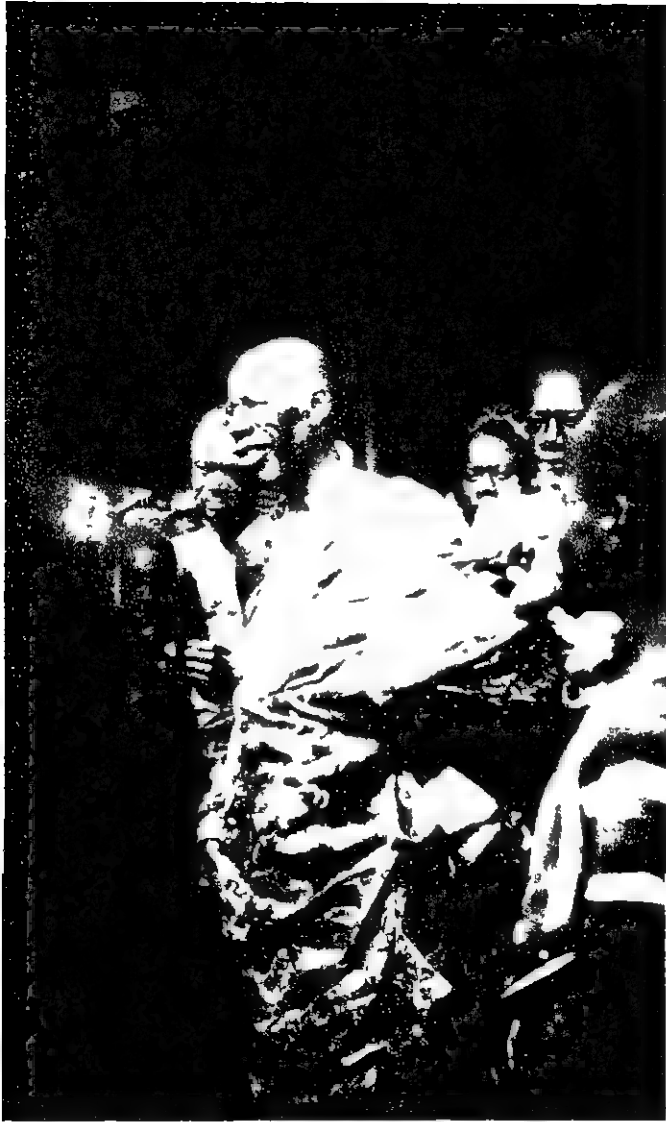
The next part of our tour will be very interesting, but quite different from what I have seen. We shall still be in Ashanti during the first week, but in the mining districts, where I shall have the opportunity of studying the important and rapid industrial development of the country.

It is getting so late that I must close this letter, but not before sending you two native prayers. The first is an invocation to the Sky God, very similar to the one offered by the Queen-Mother of Mampon during the consecration of Mary's silver stool.

"Sky God, upon whom men lean and do not fall, Goddess of Earth, Creature that rules the underworld, Leopard that possesses

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<sup>1</sup> I have since heard from Mr Maxwell that the tree is doing very well.



RECEPTION AT SFRONDI





## LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST 191

the forest, Tano river, by your kindness the edges of the year have met (i.e., the year has completed its circle), and we have brought all the shrines of the gods to sprinkle them with water. May you stand behind us with a good standing. Let no bad thing whatever overtake us. We give our children, we give our wives, we give ourselves into your hands, let no evil come upon us."

This second prayer is equally beautiful, especially the last sentence with its response to the love of the white man.

"The man who loves me comes to me, and when he goes away I shall stand behind him and accompany him on a good path that he may go his way. Many of my children say they will go to school, and I do not stand in their path, and say they must not serve the Supreme God. In my own being I am the Son of God, and if my grandchildren say that the white man loves me and has drawn nigh to me, I, too, shall stand behind him."

### HUNI VALLEY

*In the train,*

*June 2*

It is positively streaming with rain. We have just returned from a disastrous attempt at exercise, which consisted in walking down the railway line, tumbling over sleepers and floundering into pools of water at every step. We had not got very far before the rain came down in sheets, and we fled into the telegraph-office, while a messenger was sent tearing back to my coach to fetch mackintoshes and umbrellas and anything that would give us some protection from the ceaseless streams of water descending from the sky. As there is no prospect of the rain stopping and one cannot do very much in a train, I am spending the two hours till dinner-time in writing to you.

I do admire you for finding time and patience to wade through these voluminous letters. I fear they are very much like parts of a Child's Guide to Knowledge ("Gold Coast Section"), but if you can bear

## 192 LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST

more statistics and figures, here is a list that will show you the enormous development and ever-growing prosperity of the Colony I have only taken the returns for the last five years, since 1919

*The Trade* has increased from 430,000 tons to 755,000 tons

*The exports of Cocoa* from 92,000 tons to 223,000 tons

(More than half the world's supply)

*The exports of Manganese* from 31,000 tons to 233,000 tons

*The exports of Kola* from 13 million lb to 17 million lb

*The Revenue* from £1 581,000 to £3 971,000

*The Surplus* from £792,000 to £3,120,000

*The Railways* from 253 miles to 500 miles

*The Motor Roads* from 1,300 miles to 3,651 miles

We had a wonderful "send off" from Kumasi last night As I told you, the Regiment was giving a ball in my honour, planned during my first visit there in April The night was glorious, hot and still, with marvellous starlight As one must always be prepared for rain at this time of the year, an enormous awning roofed in the garden in front of the mess, and there were hundreds of fairy lamps and little lanterns, masses of lilies and other tropical flowers, arches of palms and flags festooned from side to side The ball was lovely and you can't think how I enjoyed myself, but, like Cinderella, I had to leave before midnight, in order to join the train I left a whole row of disappointed partners, but promised to fulfil the rest of my dancing-programme on my next visit to Kumasi

It was with real regret that I took leave of my kind Kumasi friends, and especially of Mr Maxwell, who has done so much to make my visit a happy and interesting one

As the train steamed slowly out of the station, the Hausa Farewell was sounded Never shall I forget its beauty The buglers had been posted at intervals in the bush down the line, and each successive bugler took up the call till it blended and mingled into one

whole It was their way of bidding me farewell and God-speed until I return to Ashanti

We stopped about twenty miles outside Kumasi, at a little station called Eduadin, and after spending a peaceful night on a siding, continued our journey this morning to Bekwai and then on to Obuasi, the headquarters of the Ashanti Goldfields Corporation We persuaded Alice to remain quietly in the train and not join in what we knew would be for her a very tiring expedition

Here at Obuasi I had my first experience of being carried in a West African hammock There are two kinds of hammock, one like that which I used in South America in which you lie out flat, and another in which you sit up in a small swinging chair, each having an awning over your head The carrying poles rest on the heads of your four "boys" I had some difficulty at first in fixing up the board for my feet, and almost before I was ready, my "boys" started off at a rapid jog-trot, the pace at which they can go, no matter how heavy their passenger, is remarkable

When we arrived at the mines, I was asked whether I would care to go down, and promptly said, "Yes, I should be delighted," being always keen for any new experience, and knowing nothing of what I was letting myself in for Decima nobly volunteered to accompany me, so we two ladies, with one of the Directors and Captain Puckridge, stepped into the cage and began our descent into the depths of the earth The cage was rather small and very wet, with a big iron bar running down the centre I had to dive underneath it, and of course hit my head violently, a steady stream of very dirty water poured down from somewhere upon us, and in spite of the awful heat, we had to be muffled up in our mackintoshes to keep dry

I was convinced that never again could I possibly be as hot as I was in that cage, but I had yet to sample

the heat on the level at which the men were working I was given a small lamp to carry, but feeling that I should probably set myself and every one else alight, I refused it, and, in consequence, fell into at least fifty holes, deep ones too, full of water, and hit my head every ten yards on a projecting rafter

We walked for miles, as it seemed, penetrating into almost impossible places, and lying full-length along slippery beams to watch the men hewing out the rock, and, after an hour in the most stifling heat, returned to the entrance, and once more entered the cage and ascended the shaft

I will not attempt to describe what I looked like when I emerged into the open. I was in such a state of dirt and heat that the only thing to do was to seek the shelter of my hammock, and I demanded to be taken back at once, and with all possible speed, to the train. In vain was it urged that H E was expecting me at the Manager's bungalow and that I ought to proceed there at once, I refused point-blank, and said that all I wanted was a bath and dry clothes. But even when I reached the seclusion of my coach, my troubles were not over, as the various officials whom I should have met up at the bungalow came over to the train to be presented to me, and my hope of ever being clean again receded farther and farther. eventually, however, I was allowed to change my wet clothes and return to something approaching normal conditions

As a souvenir of my first experience of an Ashanti goldmine, I was presented with a small lump of pure gold, and feel quite ready to visit any number of mines, no matter what the heat is below, if I am to be "dashed" with pure gold at the end

We left Obuasi after lunch and arrived here in time for tea.



COURTYARD AT ELMINA CASTLE



## LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST 195

### TARKWA

*June 4*

This is such a lovely place, but how it can rain ! Tarkwa, besides being the centre of the mining-district, boasts of the highest rainfall in the whole of the Colony, and even for West Africa there is a great deal. Ever since we left Kintampo everything I wear has been in a permanent state of damp clamminess, but here my garments are positively wringing wet. This must strike you as very uncomfortable and disagreeable, but it is not half so bad as it sounds, and one soon gets used to the rains. Strange to say I have lost all my rheumatism, and continue to be very well in spite of everything.

I must tell you an excellent story against myself. Some time ago I hurt my finger, and fearing that it might become serious, I showed it to three eminent medical men, who, to my surprise, were not at all alarmed or interested in it. Dr. Le Fanu prescribed some ointment. When I got here I demanded to see a fourth doctor as I thought it really was looking rather inflamed. Dr. Fraser, the clever young Scotch doctor, who arrived to examine it, advised fomentations, and extensive preparations were made for this operation. We were surrounded by basins of all sorts and sizes, boiling kettles, enormous rolls of medicated wool and packages of lint and oil-silk. Alice prepared the most elaborate compress and bandaged the injured member with much care in the most approved hospital style. I wondered whether I ought not to have it in a sling. But, after an hour's time, I happened to look at my poor hand and discovered that I had given the wrong finger to foment. The poor dear had expended all her skill in fomenting and bandaging a perfectly sound finger ! From all this you will gather my hurt cannot be very serious.

Before we arrived at Tarkwa we went off the direct route, and over part of a new railroad which is still under construction, as the Governor wished to view a very fine bridge that is being built over the Prah river

Our way lay through the Ju-ju Forest, which no native will live in or pass straight through. There was just then some difficulty in procuring the labour necessary to cut the new line, and I am a little vague as to how they finally overcame their objections and fears, as I know that, even now, they refuse to live in this particular part of the forest.

The Prah is a magnificent river, very wide and swift in parts, the forest stretches right down to the edge of the water, and it is all so beautiful that one cannot but regret that civilization, in the shape of iron rails, engines and trucks, should spoil the landscape. At lunch-time we returned to the train and proceeded leisurely to Tarkwa.

It was a gorgeous day, and the sun was so fierce that I thought it wiser not to stand about on the bridge, but to go direct to the Manager's bungalow and await the Governor there.

Our bungalows are situated on the top of a steep ridge, and owing to the heavy rains, Captain Burner, the District Commissioner, advised us not to attempt the hill in the cars. Alice and Decima got into hammocks, but I insisted on walking, and was rather proud of being the only one of the party who showed no signs of distress on reaching the top. Our bungalow is some little distance from the Governor's, and very comfortable. This time my fellow-lodgers are not swallows, but a very friendly cat and two delightful terriers. At first they did not like my having turned them and their master out of their home, but now, having discovered that there is an ever-ready supply of biscuits in my room, we are inseparable.



## LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST 197

When it is not raining and there are no mists, the view is gorgeous. The ridge on which we live overlooks a dense mass of elegant feathery bamboos and tall flowering trees, and an avenue of royal palms borders each side of the road from the very foot of the hill to the top. Round the houses are masses of morning glory, the lovely scented moon-flower (which only opens at night), my favourite red lilies, spider lilies, roses, and, in fact, every flower and creeper you could wish for. Even with the rain, I am perfectly happy.

We have had a very quiet time all day, as it is much too wet to think of going out, except for our meals at the big bungalow, so Alice and I have been busy writing up our mail, resting, and reading.

I must have wearied you so much with all my statistics and prosaic details that I think you deserve a few fairy-tales as a reward of your patience. I need not remind you that the hero of nearly all Ashanti folk-lore is Ananse, the Spider, and Captain Rattray thinks it probable that most of these stories have a religious origin or meaning, as the Supreme Being is often styled "Ananse Kokroko," or the "Great Spider." There is a delightful explanation of how the Spider unwittingly spread wisdom all over the world. Here it is as near as I can remember the original.

The Spider having got together all the wisdom the world contained packed it up inside a gourd, and then decided to climb up to the very top of a tall tree and hide it there for safety (and no doubt for his own benefit as well). But because he strapped the gourd underneath his body, it was very difficult for him to climb, and his son, Ntikuma, watching his vain efforts, remarked sarcastically, "If you really possessed the wisdom of the whole world, as you pretend, you would surely have had sufficient common sense to

strap your gourd on your back " The Spider was furious, but could not help seeing that his son was right He threw down the gourd in a temper, and it broke into a thousand pieces Its precious contents were spilt upon the ground, and people came and gathered up as much wisdom as each one could carry away with him

If it does not bore you, I can tell you also why the moon and stars draw their light from the sun This time, though Ananse comes into the tale, it is his son, Kweku Tsin, who is the real hero Each of the Ananse stories begins by telling you that " there was a famine in the land," and this one is no exception to the rule

Ananse and Kweku Tsin went out into the forest to forage for food, and soon, to their great joy, Kweku Tsin shot a deer , Ananse left his son to guard it, while he ran home to fetch a large basket to carry back their prize He seemed to be away for such a long time that Kweku Tsin became alarmed, and fearing that Ananse had lost his way, began to call out " Father, Father ! " to which he soon heard a voice answer " Yes, my son " Kweku Tsin shouted and danced with delight to think that his father had come at last , but to his terror a horrible Dragon appeared, breathing fire and smoke, and the poor boy fled into a cave for safety

When the Dragon arrived on the spot, he was furious to find a deer lying on the ground instead of a human being, and in his rage he beat the body with his stick At last, however, he went away, Kweku Tsin crept out from his hiding-place, and Ananse reappeared and, hearing about the Dragon, declared he would like to see it His wish was soon fulfilled, for the monster, scenting human flesh, returned and, seizing both the father and son, carried them off to his castle

Here they were thrown into a dungeon which was already full of his other poor victims who were being

kept there to be eaten at leisure. Their gaoler was a large White Cock, the Dragon's most trusted servant. The Cock always crowed loudly when anything of importance happened and could be heard for miles, warning the Dragon that there was trouble at the castle. His great failing, however, was an inordinate love of rice.

Having safely deposited these two new prisoners, the Dragon went away, and Kweku Tsin consulted with the other captives as to whether there was a possibility of escape, but they were all too terrified to make the attempt, because the Dragon had such wonderfully keen sight that he could detect the tiniest fly ten miles off. Quite undaunted, however, by the fear and timidity of his fellow-prisoners, Kweku Tsin determined to find a way out of their horrible plight, and, knowing how greedy the White Cock was, he thought he might turn the failing to his own advantage.

One day, having managed to slip out into the great hall, he discovered forty sacks of rice, which he cut open, scattering their entire contents on the ground. While the White Cock was greedily devouring this unexpected feast, Kweku Tsin ordered all the prisoners who could weave to make a very long rope-ladder, thinking that if he threw it up to heaven the gods would take pity on them and hold it for them to climb up into the sky for safety. Whilst the rope was being woven, Kweku Tsin told the rest of the prisoners to kill all the cattle they needed, but to keep the bones for him, and these he put into a large sack. He then fetched the Dragon's magic fiddle, which played such wonderful tunes that everybody who heard it began to dance at once, no matter what they were doing or whether they wished to or not.

Everything now being ready, Kweku Tsin took the rope ladder and threw it up into the sky. The gods caught hold of it, held it firm and the prisoners began

climbing up as fast as they could , but just at this critical moment the Dragon turned that piercing eye of his on to the castle, saw his victims escaping, and rushed back in a terrible fury

Kweku Tsin saw him coming, seized the bag of bones, tucked the magic fiddle under his arm and started running up the ladder as fast as he could , but the Dragon began climbing up after him, so Kweku Tsin took a bone and threw it at him    The monster, being ravenous, was compelled to stop and eat it, and this gave our hero time to mount a little higher, and every now and again he played a tune on the fiddle    Of course as soon as the Dragon heard the magic music, he was obliged to descend to the ground and begin to dance , but suddenly he made a wild rush and would have caught Kweku Tsin had not the latter, with great courage, bent down, and cut the ladder from under his feet    The Dragon was thus hurled to earth and dashed to pieces, while the gods, who had been anxiously watching Kweku Tsin, drew him and his ladder safe up into the sky    They were so impressed with his wonderful bravery, and the way in which he had helped all the prisoners to escape that as a reward they changed him into the Sun , Ananse at the same time became the Moon, and all their friends and companions were transformed into stars, drawing light and brightness from Kweku Tsin

SEKONDI,

*June 6*

I have visited so many mines during these last days that I am quite bewildered with all I have seen    Yesterday we saw two, one at Abontiakoon, and one farther on, at Abosso

On arriving at Abontiakoon, some one suggested I might possibly like to go down the mine    I regret to



PALAUER AT ELMINA



say that this proposal was not received with enthusiasm, there were, in fact, distinct signs of mutiny on the part of Decima and Captain Puckridge at the thought of having to repeat our Obuasi experience. I own that I myself was not over keen to do it, but was quite prepared to sacrifice my feelings if necessary. In anticipation of what I might have to do, I was wearing my "bush kit," and fear it looked rather shabby compared with the pretty white dresses of the various ladies who had kindly come out to meet me.

The weather was gorgeous, and after yesterday's drenching rain, the sun was quite welcome.

When we had finished inspecting giant drills, crushing plants, and all sorts of machinery, we went on to Abosso, where we were met by the Manager, Mr Thompson, and Mr Ulrick, another of my fellow-passengers on the "Aba."

As one mine is very like another, I will not weary you with technical details, but tell you of the bungalow where we were to lunch. To compensate for the unavoidable ugliness of mines and shafts, the officials living in this neighbourhood have the blessing of electric light and electric fans, and you simply cannot imagine what a luxury they are in this country.

Mrs Holmes, the charming wife of the Secretary for the Mines, in whose delightful bungalow Decima and the Governor are staying, had come all the way from Tarkwa in order to superintend and prepare our most excellent luncheon.

Unless one has lived on the Coast, one cannot possibly realize how splendid these Englishwomen are. Their lives are not easy—they are sometimes very lonely, the "boys" can often be a great trial, though if one has infinite patience and the gift of training they can be made into excellent servants, and food is a serious difficulty. All stores and little delicacies must come out from home. The absence up country of fresh

milk and butter is a big drawback, and though meat is obtainable, it lacks *nourishment* and is often very poor stuff. Above all the trials, is that of the climate. Yet these women are so cheery and full of courage that they make light of their many difficulties, and refuse to leave their husbands until actually ordered home by the doctor. I am convinced we do not sufficiently recognize the magnificent and unselfish part played by the women in these distant and little-known outposts of the Empire, not the least of their trials is the fact that life on the Coast means separation from their children.

We had intended to take a walk after tea, but, strange to say, it rained.

This morning, before leaving for the train, I went up to Insuta, to see the marvellous manganese mine. One cannot strictly describe it as a mine, as it is a mountain of iron ore which is being cut away by machinery. Its discovery in 1915 came at a most opportune moment, for the Russian supply of this much-needed material had practically stopped. After one year we were already exporting over four thousand tons, and now, in 1925, the figure has risen to 233,000 tons. I am not a mining expert, and you must not therefore expect me to give you a very elaborate or detailed account of it all, but one of the remarkable features is that the mountain is practically alongside the railway, so there is no difficulty about transport.

We lunched with Mr. Dunstan, the Manager, and went direct from his bungalow to the train, arriving here at three o'clock.

Honestly I cannot describe my bungalow as comfortable. To begin with, Alice and I have only one-half of it, for it is a double bungalow, and the other half is occupied. The bedrooms are not very large and rather dark, so I am as usual using the small verandá as a dressing-room, the sitting-room, which



## LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST 203

has been added on, looks like a sort of kiosk I have had to pin the curtains together to prevent our overlooking each other, and the partition wall is so thin that I hope my ceaseless chatter will not disturb our fellow-residents

*June 7*

It is raining We had quite a cheery dance at the Club last night To my great delight Major and Mrs Walker-Leigh were present, his leave is just due and they are waiting here for the mail-boat to take them home It was great fun talking over our tour in the Northern Territories and all the past experiences of that wonderful time

To-day is Trinity Sunday I motored to church at 6 30, which is a nice little building, served by a most excellent African priest

As the rain shows no sign of stopping, there is nothing to be done but remain at home Somewhere I have read that "Africa without sun is like a beautiful woman without charm", I wonder what the author of that very true remark would say could he or she view West Africa, not only without sunshine, but in the rainy season and from the windows of a leaking bungalow at Sekondi

The rain is pouring in through every crevice. I have got an array of basins and pans dotted about to try and catch some of the water, as I don't want my unknown host's furniture and rugs to be absolutely ruined When I talk of rain, don't imagine it is that gentle persistent trickle we have at home it comes down here in ceaseless, relentless sheets and obliterates everything from view

We have had to put one of my mackintosh ground-sheets over the seat of the car as the cushions were soaked and the other ground-sheet we have tucked under the hood, for in spite of its being made of a

double thickness of canvas with a grass mat as well (originally intended to keep the sun off our heads), the water streams through on to its poor occupants

In a short while I shall have to brave these furious elements, for it is almost time for lunch. I am sorry that this is such a dull letter, but what is there to write about when the rain keeps one a prisoner indoors!

\* \* \* \* \*

*June 9*

I have just emerged from a hot bath and have swallowed ten grains of quinine, and as the time of day is 11 a.m. you will gather that I have been out in the wet. We went off at an incredibly early hour to visit the famous harbour of Takoradi. Alice chose the wiser part and remained safe and dry under her mosquito nets at home, while Decima, Captain Puckridge and I set forth on what proved to be the wettest expedition imaginable, even for Takoradi in the rainy season.

I mentioned the name Takoradi to you in my first letter from the Coast, but only to say that I would tell you more about it when we came down to Sekondi on the completion of our tour. Once again you must be prepared to listen to a short lecture.

Compared with other countries, the Gold Coast is at a serious disadvantage as regards facilities for quick transport and shipping. There are as yet only two big railway routes, the one from Accra to Kumasi and the one from Sekondi to Kumasi. The big rivers are totally unpractical for navigation, which means that all produce exported from the interior must be brought down either by head transport or by motor-lorry (horse or mule transport being impossible owing to the tsetse). But the greatest difficulty to be contended with is the absence of harbours or sheltered roadsteads along the Coast. All cargo has to be conveyed out to the

ships by means of surf-boats (in which eleven men are required to one ton of cargo), and only at two or three ports are the ships served by lighters. Everything has to be shipped to and from the open beach, and anyone with the slightest knowledge of what a bad surf means will realize the enormous loss of cargo involved, due sometimes to damage by sea-water, sometimes to total loss overboard.

With the rapid development and growth of trade throughout the Colony, this mode of transport is becoming both costly and inadequate. Takoradi is the only place on the Coast that offers any possibilities as a harbour, and though as far back as 1904 a jetty with a protective breakwater for the open lighterage harbour was built at Sekondi, it was not until 1920 that any definite steps could be taken to consider the possibility of constructing a deep-water harbour at Takoradi. Two long breakwaters are now being built enclosing an anchorage for at least a dozen steamers, there will also be all the necessary wharves and export sheds, and, in fact, everything that belongs to a first-class port. A complete system of town-planning is under consideration, and I am glad to hear that it includes plans for a hospital.

Well, we started off by car at the hour of seven to view this wonderful place, and it was quite fine when we left, though the horizon had an ominous angry look. On our arrival I was received by Mr. Adams and the other officials. We went first into the office where all the plans were explained to me, and then we climbed into a little train and started off to where the actual work of construction is going on.

We bumped happily along the already completed section of the breakwater, and on reaching the end got out to watch the process of piling up and fitting together the huge blocks of granite which compose the breakwater. There was a very bad surf and the waves

were dashing all over us, but this was of no account, and I had just scrambled down to a splendid but rather perilous place to view the work, when the tornado broke, and in one second we were drenched to the skin.

We hurried back to the train, but as it was open on all four sides there was not much shelter. At times the storm was so terrific that I thought we should be blown over into the sea, but we reached the motors in safety and drove up to Mr Adams's quarters for breakfast. My heart failed me when I peered out of the car and saw the rushing torrent of water between myself and the front door, it was too wide to jump, so I resigned myself to wading through it and, resembling a drowned rat, greeted Mrs Adams, with many apologies for our appearance.

By the time I had finished breakfast my clothes had dried and, except for an occasional squelch of water in my boots, I was quite comfortable.

My host and hostess were charming and most kind. Mrs Adams was much concerned as to whether I should catch cold or have a "go" of fever as the result, not only of sitting in soaking wet garments for over an hour, but of the drive to Sekondi still before us, but I assured her I was quite all right and nothing seemed to hurt me in this climate.

The rain continued unabated, and the road home was completely under water, but in spite of all discomfort, I am glad I have had the chance of seeing this very important feature in the future development of the country.

*Later*

It is still raining.

I was so full of this morning's aquatic experiences that I have quite forgotten to tell you of all I did and saw yesterday.

I must begin by announcing the important fact

that it did not rain. The morning dawned beautiful, calm, hot, and sunny.

We went off at seven to visit the Railway Workshops, which were completed in 1917, and are said to be the best and most up-to-date shops in the whole of West Africa. As it is quite out of the question to give you a detailed description of every department, I think I had better just enumerate what this vast establishment comprises. There are the locomotive shops, crane equipment, saw-mill, carriage and wagon shops for repairing all carriages and goods, a machine shop fitted with the latest and most modern tools, an erecting and boiler shop, a coppersmith's and blacksmith's shop and foundry, and, lastly, a large stores department. The whole plant in these many sections is driven by electric power.

All the labour employed in these shops is African, with European foremen.

It was most interesting, for although I understand nothing about machinery, it possesses a strange fascination for me, and, like Toddie and Budge in *Helen's Babies*, I want to "see the wheels go round."

We got home just in time for breakfast, and then started off to visit the prison. As it was unbearably hot, I was quite glad to escape out of the big courtyard and take shelter in the actual prison itself, which consists of two large double-storied buildings with a broad passage between them.

The prisoners struck me as very contented and cheerful and their lot not a very hard one. The long-sentence men are taught all sorts of useful trades, such as tailoring, boot-making, carpentry, mat- and basket-making. I was much interested in watching the men preparing and dyeing the fibre and then weaving it into beautiful mats. Some were making delightful broad flat fans, with two of which I was presented.

The short sentence men are chiefly employed out-

side the prison, their duties consisting of water-carrying, and attending to public gardens, while they serve also as carriers and do other Government work. You will remember I told you that when we left Accra all my luggage was carried down from my rooms by a gang of prisoners.

On returning to my bungalow I received a little deputation consisting of the Priest-in-Charge of St Andrew's Church and four of the leading Africans belonging to the Church of England, who came to present me with a gold St Andrew's cross on a beautiful gold chain as a remembrance of my first visit to Sekondi. The gift of this cross and chain, both of which are native workmanship, was the spontaneous wish of the African community, who wanted to prove their gratitude for the interest I had shown in their work.

At 5.30 I presented the prizes at the Ladies' Shooting Club, after which I took a drive with Mr Jones, the Acting Provincial Commissioner. We went out towards the Winu river, passing through part of Lord Leverhulme's plantations.

I ought to mention here that no stranger can acquire land on the Coast. The laws of land tenure are as complicated as those that govern inheritance, fifty years being the longest lease granted. If you want to know more about this intricate question, please read the twenty-fifth chapter of Leviticus, because the laws given by Moses to the children of Israel are precisely the same as those that are in force in West Africa to-day. We have never tampered or interfered with them, even though the disability to buy land makes European commercial enterprise rather difficult.

After dinner we went for a reception and dance to the big Railway Institute, which is really a large club for the English officials and employees connected with the railway.

I know you will be very sorry to hear that just before

we left Tarkwa the sad news came through that O K Jones had died. He had put up such a magnificent fight all this long time, and as he had managed to struggle through so many days of this dreaded black-water fever, we were beginning to hope he might pull through, but I suppose his strength was literally worn out, and the end came last week. Father Martin reached him in time, but could not remain with him until the end. An excellent nurse was sent down from the European Hospital at Kumasi, and Mrs Wilkinson came over from Kintampo to be there until the nurse arrived.

Though I saw Mr Jones only that one day at Wenchi I do feel so sad about it. I am so glad that after all I took his Polly.

## CAPE COAST

June 10

This is the last halting-place on our tour, as our next journey will take us back to Accra. We left Sekondi this morning after breakfast and arrived here at noon, the drive being full of interest. Half-way to Cape Coast we stopped at Elmina, one of the most beautiful of these old castles, and it has such an interesting history that I am sure you will like to hear a little about it. The first fort was built by the French in 1482, and it was known as the *Bastion de France*, but they abandoned it about forty years later. The Portuguese arrived on the scene in 1482, and, in their turn, started building a fort which they named "San Jorge d'Elmina." Their expedition, commanded by Don Diego d'Azambuya, consisted of a large force, including many Portuguese noblemen and a hundred masons. Finding a huge rock they commenced to quarry it, but were at once attacked by the Elminas, who regarded it as the abode of the Abosum of the Benya Su. Undisturbed they continued the work, and

the building progressed so rapidly that in the space of twenty days the tower had already reached the first story, a performance due to the fact that they had brought out a quantity of prepared materials which only needed fitting together and placing in position.

The tower still stands at the principal entrance to the castle just beyond the drawbridge. The Portuguese remained in possession of the fort till 1637, when it was attacked and captured by Prince Maurice of Nassau, Governor of the Dutch West Indies and a close relation of William, Prince of Orange. A tablet in Dutch recording the taking of the fort is inserted in the wall over the main gate, and a large stone marks the place where the Portuguese Governor delivered up the keys.

The Dutch did much to improve the castle, restoring the Bastion de France, joining it on to the main building, and extending and strengthening the fortifications. The following year they added a drawbridge and also built to the N E of the castle a small but very strong fort called Conraadsburg. Later on they built stone walls along the Benya Su, converting it into a little harbour to shelter small vessels.

In 1680-81 the Elminas besieged the castle, but without success. The Dutch had four men killed, while the Elminas' losses amounted to more than eighty, besides many prisoners. These unfortunate victims were chained one to another and kept stark naked and exposed to all weathers alongside the batteries for nine months. At length the Elminas realized that the castle was impregnable, burned their homes and retired to another district.

The English bombarded the castle from the sea during the Anglo-Dutch War of 1781, at the same time attacking it with a land force from Cape Coast. The attack proved a failure owing to lack of co-operation between the two forces.

Finally, in 1872, we bought the castle from the Dutch.



The building apparently was considered to be of no value, as nothing was charged for except the stores, for which the English Government paid £3,790 1s 6½d. Please note the halfpenny.

After this historical digression I must describe our arrival. The whole route was lined with smiling and cheerful natives, hundreds of schoolchildren waving Union Jacks and all singing the National Anthem. We drew up in front of the castle and were met by Mr Atterbury, the Provincial Commissioner, then we crossed over the drawbridge and entered the famous castle of Elmina.

It was too lovely, but it seemed so strange to come upon a mediæval castle on the West Coast of Africa. Part of it now being used as Government offices it is kept in good repair. We wandered all over it, in and out of all the old rooms, examining everything, including the beautiful banqueting hall, and then we went down into the dungeons. Oh, those dungeons! Is it possible that Europeans, laying claim to Christianity and civilization, could have been guilty of such inhuman horrors as were perpetrated behind those walls! For weeks and weeks hundreds of unfortunate slaves were kept in these gruesome cells, with no air or light and barely enough food or water to keep life in their wretched bodies. Those that survived this living death were then shipped overseas.

When our tour of inspection was finished, we went upstairs to wait till all the preparations for the Palaver were complete.

The view from the windows of our room was beautiful. Imagine a long line of surf breaking on a shore fringed with coco-nut palms, all the gorgeous setting of a Palaver, with the chiefs under their state umbrellas, their imposing array of followers, hundreds of white-clad schoolchildren, and over all, dazzling sunshine and a deep blue sky.

## 212 LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST

The Palaver did not take very long, and soon we left Elmina behind us and were once more on our way to Cape Coast

You remember it was here at Cape Coast that Christle was quartered for so long in 1895, while all the preparations were being made for the march to Kumasi. Among the many important officials who received us on our arrival in the town was a Chief—who was also a native officer—named Coker, who had volunteered to get all the carriers and porters together for Sir Francis Scott's expedition. When the Great War broke out he once more offered his services and undertook the task of organizing the transport for Togoland and the Cameroons.

Our bungalows are situated on a steep ridge some distance out of the town. This time my quarters are charming. I am living in the District Commissioner's bungalow, and my hostess, Mrs. Fieldgate, has taken endless trouble in making everything pretty and comfortable for me.

It is really marvellous the cheerful way in which all the officials have turned out of their homes for us during this tour, and although Mrs. Fieldgate assures me that she enjoys giving up her delightful bungalow to me, I am convinced it has put her to a great deal of inconvenience.

*June 11*

It is raining, and has rained without one moment's pause since last evening.

It is really very disappointing, as all the functions planned for this afternoon have had to be cancelled. I was to have unveiled a bust of Grandmama<sup>1</sup> in the Victoria Park and then I was to have been present at a garden party given by the Town Council. The

<sup>1</sup> Her Majesty Queen Victoria

Park is under water—nothing but a lake—and the gardens of Old Government House, where our party was to have been held, are not much better

But in spite of this awful weather I have been hard at work, inspecting no fewer than eight schools I began my day by going to church at 6.30 Father Dominic (one of the Benedictines) is in charge of the church It is not a very beautiful building, and, alas, is built on English, instead of tropical, lines To-day being a great festival, the church was crammed

At ten o'clock Decima and I, escorted by Mr Fieldgate and Captain Puckridge, started off on our round of schools I visited boys' schools, I visited girls' schools, I visited infants' schools, till I marvelled that there could be so many schools in one town, and then I began on the Missions, always with the rain streaming steadily down upon us

I went to the Convent of the White Sisters, but owing to the rain most of the children had failed to turn up The Reverend Mother was charming and showed me everything One of the nuns was ill in bed with malaria, but, hearing I was there, promptly got up, and, much to Mother Superior's surprise, appeared downstairs On being gently reproved for this rash act she smilingly answered "that she could have malaria any day of the year, but the visit of a Princess happened only once in a lifetime"

After looking at some of the children's copy-books, I warmly congratulated Mother Superior on the sound and loyal teaching to which they testified Most of their dictation and essays consisted of simple explanations of the words Empire, Citizenship, Patriotism, and a really excellent description of the origin of the Union Jack

By this time I was wet through and secretly longing for the shelter of my bungalow, but there were still Father Dominic's Church of England Mission Schools

## 214 LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST

to visit These are in desperate need of funds as the accommodation is utterly inadequate, but the work carried on under such difficulties is wonderful

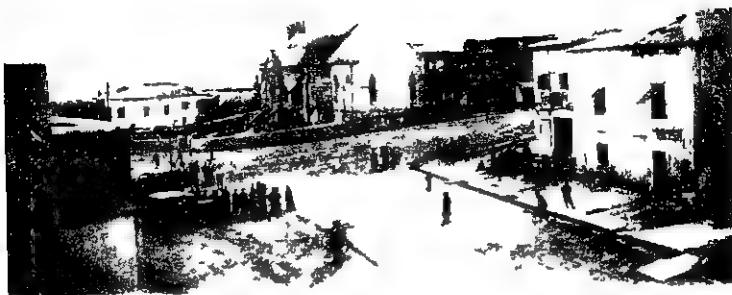
At length we got home, but it really seemed scarcely worth while to change my dripping clothes, as it was just lunch-time and going across to the Governor's bungalow would mean another soaking Don't think for one moment that I am complaining, but I want you to gain some idea of what people have to put up with in West Africa during the rainy season It is absurd to pretend you know a country if you only see it all smiling and "dressed up" True, our trek has been done under the most favourable conditions, but a certain amount of discomfort was inevitable

Strange as it may sound, I am glad it had been so, and I don't regret a single one of my experiences, not even those during the rains I love the Coast, and from the day I set foot on it I was determined to penetrate the very heart of the country If in order to do this I have had to undergo a variety of experiences, I do not complain It is perhaps just the least pleasant of these that have taught me most and helped me to gain a clear insight into the life that has to be faced out here It fills me with pride to be of the same race as these men and women who are serving our Empire in West Africa

July 12

"When the rain falls and beats upon you, and the sun comes forth and scorches you, then you behold as it were the troubles of life"—*Ashanti Proverb*

To-day has been blazing hot Every garment, every blanket and pillow I possess, has been hung over the balcony to dry, and unless "the rain falls and beats upon us" between now and bedtime I am looking forward to sleeping on dry blankets to-night Quite a welcome change



VIEW FROM CAPE COAST CASTLE



MR L AND MR FIELDGATE D C IN THE COURTYARD AT CAPE COAST CASTLE



Our day ended yesterday with an official dinner and dance.

This morning we started off fairly early to visit the old castle. I tried so hard to picture in my mind what it must have been like thirty years ago when Christle was quartered there, but, alas, there was no one to tell me anything about those old days.

The words Cape Coast are a corruption of the original Portuguese name *Cabo Corso*. The Portuguese built a fort here in the sixteenth century, but abandoned it after a short while. Then the Dutch started building a fort, which they in their turn abandoned to the Swedes. It was eventually taken by the Danes in 1657.

The actual castle that now stands was begun by the English in 1662, taken by the Dutch in the following year, but recaptured by us in 1664. From that date it remained in our hands. We improved and enlarged it, adding to its fortifications. Twice it was bombarded by the French fleet, and once attacked by the townspeople.

As in the case of Elmina, Cape Coast Castle is now used for Government offices.

In the afternoon I drove down to the Victoria Park to perform the important ceremony of unveiling Grand-mamma's memorial. It is a very beautiful marble bust and an excellent likeness. The Chairman and members of the Town Council received me. The crowd was immense and intensely enthusiastic, in fact cheering and shouting so much that I could barely hear the address of welcome, and certainly the poor Chairman never caught one word of my reply.

It was a very impressive moment when the Union Jack fell and uncovered the statue and the crowd looked upon the well-known features of their "Good Mother Queen". There was a sudden and complete silence, while an awestruck sigh seemed to escape from

## 216 LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST

all present It was quite an appreciable time before they resumed the delighted and cheerful chatter with which they had greeted my arrival

The address of welcome is so charmingly worded that I am copying it out for you

“TO HER HIGHNESS PRINCESS MARIE LOUISE

YOUR HIGHNESS,

On behalf of the people of CAPE COAST we welcome YOUR HIGHNESS on your visit to this ancient and historic Town It is a source of gratification to us that you have graciously consented to undertake the duty which we, as loyal subjects of the British Crown, are about to ask you to perform, viz, that of unveiling the Bust of Her late Majesty Queen Victoria of Ever Blessed Memory

The motive which gave birth to the idea of the erection of this Bust sprang from the desire of our people to keep before the eyes of coming generations a representation of one, whose sincere goodwill towards us, our forefathers never ceased to impress on their children, a fact which has been the mainspring keeping the people constant in their loyalty to the British Crown

Further it is a happy thought to us that our GOOD MOTHER QUEEN has had her name immortalized in two instances in this Town We refer first to the Fortification in the South-Western part of the Town, known as FORT VICTORIA, and secondly to this site on which we now attend, named VICTORIA PARK

We assure Your Highness that so long as the TOWN of CAPE COAST lasts, the name of your ILLUSTRIOUS ANCESTRESS, the EVER BELOVED QUEEN VICTORIA, will be an irresistible charm, drawing the hearts of the people towards the Empire which was built under Her auspices

We humbly ask Your Highness' acceptance of the



## LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST 217

accompanying album of photographs as a memento of your visit to our Town

We have the honour to be,  
Your Highness' Humble Servants,  
Signed by the Chairman and Members  
of the  
Victoria Park Committee "

After some conversation with the Members of the Town Council, we took our departure and went for a drive, while the rest of the company hurried off to meet me at the entrance to the gardens of Old Government House where our garden party was to take place

At last I have had the chance of hearing about Christle's stay at Cape Coast Castle, for among the guests at the garden party was the Chief Coker, whose name I have already mentioned and who had a great deal to do with Christle during that time. He told me so many interesting details. It is surely unnecessary for me to tell you that, like all who knew Christle, Coker had unbounded admiration for him, describing him as "a real soldier". His quarters were here in the castle, the rooms opening on to a long narrow passage overlooking the big courtyard—a passage I had walked along this morning, wondering to myself whether it was here he had actually lived.

Christle seems to have had unlimited energy, and Coker told me that he always took his carriers and hammock "boys" for a daily "route march" to get them fit for the march to Kumasi. He also volunteered to help in organizing the transport parties, and constituted himself a sort of unofficial assistant Paymaster. If there was any little odd job to do, "your Prince brother" was sure to offer to do it.

It is so splendid to hear how absolutely he won the confidence and trust of the native troops

## 218 LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST

Coker had also seen a good deal of Liko,<sup>1</sup> and had been responsible for and in charge of the carriers and hammock "boys" who took him back to the Coast after he developed fever at Prahsu. On Liko's arrival at Cape Coast he was taken to the little European Hospital which stands on a hill overlooking the town, and there he stayed until he embarked on H M S "Blonde" for Madeira.

Coker pleased me immensely by saying I reminded him of Christle, and certainly I resemble him in the marvellous manner I have kept fit and well through all this terrific heat, including the rains. Do you remember a passage in one of Liko's letters to Aunt Beatrice?<sup>2</sup> It is quoted in the little memoir written after his death. He writes that "Christle seems to stand this climate better than most people," and the same verdict has been passed on me.

Our party was very charming and well arranged. Assisted by Decima, I received the guests, and all the ladies in turn came and sat at my table. The Governor joined us later in the afternoon.

Before leaving I went over what was once Old Government House. It was here that Lord Wolseley (as Sir Garnet Wolseley) and Sir Evelyn Wood were quartered when at Cape Coast during the Ashanti War in 1873.

I walked out on to the balcony to watch the crowd that had assembled in the street. The people were wild with excitement, and I had to stand there for ever so long waving my thanks to them. They simply would not let me go, and I cannot tell you how delighted I was at this loyal and spontaneous greeting.

<sup>1</sup> H R H the late Prince Henry of Battenberg, who died at sea in 1896 of malaria, contracted during this Expedition.

<sup>2</sup> H R H Princess Beatrice.

## LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST 219

GOVERNMENT HOUSE, ACCRA

*June 14*

It is raining, and raining as if it had never rained before. We were almost drowned yesterday on our way to Accra, the last ten miles of the road being completely under water. I might truthfully say we motored through one long continuous lake. The weather is abominable as well as disappointing.

It was a beautiful morning when we left Cape Coast, and we all started off in high spirits on the last stage of this wonderful and more than successful tour. The first part of the road was the actual old Cape Coast road to Kumasi over which every expedition up to Ashanti has passed. About six miles out of the town you strike the splendid new motor road, but the old track runs alongside it for a considerable distance. Our way took us directly inland, and it was a joy to be travelling once more through the bush, but, alas, it was only for a short while, for the road soon wound back to the coast.

We stopped at Anamabo to greet the local Chief and then walked up to the old castle, which is much smaller than either Elmina or Cape Coast, but most lovely, and like Christianborg, stands on a huge mass of rock right out in the sea.

The history of Anamabo is very similar to that of the other castles. The Dutch built the original fort in 1640. It was captured about ten years later by the Swedes, who held it for a few years and then surrendered it to the Danes along with the fort at Cape Coast. The Dutch recaptured it in 1660, but only to lose it to the English in 1664. Admiral de Ruyter took it from us, but must have abandoned it shortly afterwards as in 1673 the English built the present castle. It fell into the hands of the Ashantis in 1806, but I cannot tell you the date when we finally retook it.

All these dates may not be very interesting to you, but I give them as it will show you that the coast of West Africa possesses a history of some importance and one closely linked up with the Anglo-Dutch wars of the seventeenth century. The great problem is how to keep these old historic landmarks in repair. There is such a large number of them, and though a good many are being used as Government offices, many remain unoccupied.

We returned to the motors and continued our journey. All the villages along our route were gay with flags and decorations. Some of them had most quaint but very loyal and affectionate greetings to their visitor under the unfamiliar style of "Mary Lewis."

On our arrival at Saltpond we had a large reception. The District Commissioner had organized it splendidly. All the schoolchildren lined each side of the street, which was a blaze of bunting. After all the presentations (Town Council and other officials) had taken place, a diminutive infant belonging to the Wesleyan Mission School came forward, positively staggering under the weight of a large and beautiful bouquet. This was intended for me, but the small mite clutched it so tightly with both hands that it took a considerable time for me to persuade her to give it up. We were then photographed, the infant and the bouquet being placed in a very prominent position. Holding me firmly by the hand, she seemed quite as disinclined to let me go as she had been to surrender her flowers.

But time was passing, and it was still some distance to Swedru, where lunch was waiting for us, so we said good-bye to all present and then rejoined the motors.

At Swedru we were met by the District Commissioner, Captain Stewart Watts, and his wife. The court house, where lunch had been prepared, was completely transformed with masses of palms and shrubs, lovely native cloths and grass mats. Mrs. Stewart

Watts had laboured indefatigably in her efforts to make an otherwise rather unattractive building delightful and comfortable. She must have stripped her own bungalow bare, as nothing was lacking for my comfort in the room set apart for me.

About half an hour after leaving Swedru the rain began. There is a range of hills separating the plain of Accra from that district, and H. E. assured me that after crossing them the rain would cease, for even in the rainy season Accra has the reputation of being comparatively dry. Instead, however, of decreasing, the rain steadily increased in force and volume.

On reaching the outskirts of Accra we found the floods so bad that the roads were closed and we had to make quite a wide *détour* to reach the Castle, which soon disclosed its friendly white walls, assuring us of shelter and dry clothes.

How we ever got up to our rooms I really don't know. The courtyard was flooded, the water pouring down the steps through the gateway into the road, but we splashed bravely through these tearing torrents, and on reaching the safety of the veranda congratulated each other that our tour had been so successfully accomplished and that we were safely home again at Accra.

*I cannot help feeling very sad that it is all over, and would be prepared to start off to-morrow and go right through the whole trek again.*

After dinner we tried to drown the noise of the rain, as well as to forget it, by turning on the gramophone and dancing energetically until bedtime.

I went to church this morning at seven, but have refused to stir out of the house since breakfast. I have just made the following entry in my Diary

*"Sunday, June 14*

*Vile wet day—poured from early dawn"*

\* \* \* \* \*

*June 16*

We have just returned from a delightful expedition to Koforidua. Alice, Captain Puckridge and I left this morning at nine. We first motored to Aburi, the Head-quarters of the Agricultural Research Department. It is situated right up in the hills, over a thousand feet above sea-level, the road being perilous but quite beautiful.

On arrival Mr and Mrs Patterson met me. Mr Patterson is the Head of the Department, and we travelled out together on the "Aba."

There is a very delightful Government bungalow at Aburi, where the Governor sometimes spends a week or two when in need of rest or quiet. The view was supremely lovely, and I was sorry not to be able to spend more time enjoying it, but we were rather hurried as I wanted to see something of the work carried on in the laboratories, we had still a long drive before us and the state of the road was uncertain.

The District Commissioner, Commander Saxton, met me at the boundary of his district and acted as pilot in case of accidents or a breakdown. We stopped at his bungalow at Mampon and he showed me a number of photographs of Uncle Arthur and Aunt Louischen<sup>1</sup> and Patsy<sup>2</sup> taken in South Africa. Commander Saxton was serving in the ship that took them out to the Cape for the State Opening of the first Union Parliament, and had accompanied them up country.

After a short rest we continued our way to Koforidua. Although our expedition was planned yesterday and there can have been only very short notice, all the little villages I passed through were decorated, while the paraded schoolchildren waved flags and sang the National Anthem.

<sup>1</sup> T R H The Duke and Duchess of Connaught

<sup>2</sup> The Lady Patricia Ramsay

Koforidua is a very important cocoa centre in the Eastern Province and also the head-quarters of the Provincial Commissioner, Major Jackson, D S O We drove straight to his bungalow, where he and Mrs Jackson met us It was all delightful Our host and hostess were most charming and hospitable, and my one regret was that our visit had to be so short

After luncheon we had a brief rest, and then I visited the little Native Hospital From there we motored to the station, as we were to make the return journey to Accra by train All the leading residents and some *of the local chiefs were on the platform to see me off*, and having arrived in good time I had ample opportunity of talking with them

On the whole the day was fine, but we had some terrific rainstorms before we reached home

We spent a very quiet day yesterday, owing to the fact that it rained steadily till tea-time, but we managed to get a short drive up to Achimota before dark

Mr Finlay, Acting Colonial Secretary, and Mrs Finlay, and Mr Wilkinson, Attorney-General, came to dinner Mrs Finlay has been busy collecting a mass of bulbs for me to bring home Her solicitude is only another instance of the universal kindness showered *upon me by every one I have met* I shall indeed be sorry to bid all these charming people farewell

After dinner we went on to a dance at Captain Cookson's<sup>1</sup> bungalow Of course all the pretty decorations were wrecked by the rain, which was a real disaster as he had illuminated the garden with a number of fairy lamps and lanterns I was so distressed at his disappointment To have taken so much trouble and then at the last moment to have everything spoilt was too disheartening

<sup>1</sup> Inspector-General of Prisons

*June 17*

I have had an extremely busy time, and, strange to say, there has been very little rain. We are beginning to feel quite dry again, and the courtyard presents a more normal appearance.

In order to provide some sort of protection from the remorseless elements, an awning had been erected and a red baize carpet put down between the entrance to the Castle and the stairs leading up to the veranda, but, alas, on the bad days, the water poured off and through the awning on to our heads in steady streams and the carpet was a soaking mass from which flowed broad red rivers. It was heartrending to see the lovely courtyard so disfigured.

I started to-day by riding with Alice, Captain Cookson and Captain Puckridge before breakfast. Then came an awful morning of the first packing and sorting of the many things I have accumulated during these past months.

In the afternoon I unveiled a drinking-fountain put up by the town of Accra as a tribute and mark of affection to John Maxwell,<sup>1</sup> and also in recognition of all he did for Accra during his term of office as President of the Town Council. Knowing my admiration for him, you will understand I was especially delighted at being invited to perform the ceremony.

I have described it as an "unveiling," but really I had to open it, or, to be more accurate, to turn on the water.

We then drove out to the Rifle Range, as I had promised to present the prizes to the Ladies' Rifle Club. This Club was founded in 1904 by Lady Roger, wife of the Governor, and was the first Rifle Club to be started on the Coast. Lady Roger was the first President, a position always filled by the wives of the successive Governors.

<sup>1</sup> Chief Commissioner of Ashanti





ANAUALO CASTLE



IANTI WOMEN AT CAPL COAST



Scarcely had we arrived on the scene when it began to rain, so, huddled up in a mackintosh under a dripping umbrella, I performed the ceremony. As usual we ended our day by dancing, this time at the Club.

June 18

I performed this afternoon the most important function of laying the foundation-stone of the first 'Infants' Hospital on the Coast.

The question of Infant Mortality out here is one of desperate urgency, and the Governor is devoting much of his attention to fighting this serious menace to the future of the race. It is due to his foresight and initiative that the Government is taking wise and drastic steps in this direction. During the last few years H E has been urging the prominent citizens in the larger towns and districts to help in forming Infant Welfare Centres, and Accra has been selected as the Head-quarters for the whole of this important movement, thereby giving the lead to the rest of the country.

Last year they had a big Baby Show in Accra at the conclusion of their Health Week. A hundred and fifty babies competed, and the proud winner received as her prize a silver porringer, sent out by May<sup>1</sup> as a practical and encouraging proof of her great interest in this valuable work.

H E is doing the most splendid service to West Africa in starting this Infants' Hospital. It will consist of two wards, a pathological laboratory, a dispensary and waiting-room, quarters for two African nurses and the necessary offices. It will also be the centre for instruction and training and will be in charge of the two women medical officers who are already conducting the whole of the Child Welfare work at Accra.

<sup>1</sup> H M The Queen

Dr Nora Robinson will be at the head of the Hospital. She is not only very able, but most charming, and we have had long and interesting discussions on Child Welfare. When she comes home on her next leave I am going to take her down to Bermondsey and show her the Infant Welfare Centre<sup>1</sup> which I started the year the War broke out.

But to return to the laying of the foundation-stone. H E and Decima received me and we proceeded to a small dais. Accra in its entirety was present. The Governor made a most excellent and instructive speech, his appalling statistics of the mortality among infants and young children proving the imperative necessity of the whole organization and what this Hospital is meant to achieve.

I then laid the stone, and at the Governor's request named it "The Marie Louise Hospital for Mothers and Infants." The whole ceremony lasted about an hour, and then Alice and I took a drive.

*June 19*

My last day at Accra

It was to have been such a thrilling and busy day. Owing to our being up country on June 3rd, the Governor had received permission to hold the official celebration of the King's Birthday on our return to Accra, and to-day was fixed for the great event.

Inspections and official parades were to have taken place early this morning, and this evening an enormous dinner and ball, but last night it had already begun to rain and it has never stopped for one second since then.

On account of the floods both from above and below, everything has been cancelled. It is no use being

<sup>1</sup> "Princess Marie Louise's Club for Mothers and Babies," Jamaica Road, Bermondsey, S E

disappointed, for in the rainy season one lives in a permanent state of uncertainty as regards plans. In spite of the weather I had to motor up to the Scottish Mission this morning, as I wanted to call on Mrs. Wilkie and thank her for her kind hospitality to Annie, who has been her guest during the whole of my absence on tour.

On my return I received a deputation from the African members of Holy Trinity Church. Father Martinson, the African Priest, introduced the party and made a very touching little speech, at the conclusion of which he presented me with a beautiful crucifix and chain on behalf of the members of the Church of England at Accra. Both chain and crucifix were made by an African goldsmith. The workmanship is really quite beautiful, and I shall always value this spontaneous tribute of loyalty and affection from these kindly folk.

If in addition to your love for this country and its people, you are willing to study their past history, you will find that everything you touch has its own particular significance and tradition. For instance, I have told you my crucifix and chain are the work of an African goldsmith. I am not sure whether the same interesting traditions and laws govern the goldsmith's craft down on the coast as those which prevail in Ashanti, but if they did I should value it, if possible, the more.

In olden days the goldsmiths of Ashanti were an honoured guild, members of a brotherhood possessing the curious right to call a brother goldsmith's wife "my wife." They also were allowed to wear golden ornaments, a privilege otherwise strictly limited to kings, their wives, and the great chiefs.

In the district of Bekwai (we passed through Bekwai on our way from Kumasi to Tarkwa) all goldsmiths claim descent from Fusu Kwebi, the original founder of

their trade who has indeed become the goldsmiths' god. A few of the actual tools and weights that he used, including his bellows, are still in existence.

Captain Rattray was informed by a local Bekwai goldsmith that he had once plied his trade in the spirit world, "as was made manifest at his birth by his having across the palms of his hands lines representing a pair of tongs."

If a goldsmith's wife was guilty of infidelity, the injured husband, in addition to "costs," would receive a special sum to cover the expense of necessary rites of purification for his tools and implements.

The craft (I am again indebted to Captain Rattray) was zealously preserved in certain families. Failing a son, the sister's son (again note the descent through the woman) would be forced to follow the dead man's trade. If, however, the son elected to carry on his father's work, he had the right to inherit the tools and weights, but if the nephew happened to be a member of the craft, he, by virtue of his maternal descent, would have the first right and claim to the entire stock as his property.

Here is another curious little scrap of information, which has no earthly connection with either goldsmiths, or Accra, or the rains, but deals with the Northern Territories, and the Tumu District in particular. I quite forgot to mention it when I wrote to you from there. It relates to the 1921 census, when orders went forth that the people were to be numbered, but even the wisest among them were at a loss to know how to set about it. When the day arrived to render the account, the Chief's messengers came into the District Commissioner's office bearing calabashes containing stones, ground-nuts and beans. These stood respectively for the men, the women, and the children of the different tribes.

I had one more interview before lunch, when Captain

Bilcraft, Inspector of Prisons and late K R R C,<sup>1</sup> came to see me. As he had served with Christle, in the same Battalion, you can imagine how we gossiped over old "60th" days.

The universal tribute that is paid to his memory by all who served with him or who ever met him is a wonderful thing. Captain Bilcraft's concluding remark was "The Prince was a fine soldier and a typical Rifleman." Could one wish to have higher praise?

Now as regards my journey home, the Governor tells me he has arranged for Captain Peake,<sup>2</sup> who is returning by the same boat, to look after me on board. He and a brother of his are in the Survey Department, and both have just completed their tour. I met them the other evening at Colonel Rowe's<sup>3</sup> bungalow.

The task of surveying this country is one of extreme difficulty, but also of supreme importance for the development of the Colony. With H E rests the credit for having initiated the first organized survey in West Africa, which he did in 1910-11 in Nigeria. The outbreak of war put a stop to the work, but on his appointment as Governor of this Colony he at once re-established it, and now the Survey Department of the Gold Coast is the finest and best in West Africa.

In the Governor's annual address to his Legislative Council in February he quotes an extract from the dispatch of the ex-Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr J H Thomas) in which the latter deals with the report of the Colonial Survey Commission. It ends with the following words: "The Gold Coast Survey may well be taken as a model by other Colonies and Protectorates whose surveys are less advanced."

H E took me into his office this morning and showed me the maps already completed. There are over a

<sup>1</sup> King's Royal Rifle Corps.

<sup>2</sup> Captain E R L Peake, M C, R E.

<sup>3</sup> Lt-Colonel Rowe, D S O, M C\*, R A, Surveyor-General.

hundred sheets of these large one-inch maps, and more than half of them have been printed and published here on the Coast

Without accurate maps, how can a country like West Africa be developed and opened up? I told you about the ju-ju forest we passed through on our way up to the Prah river. Captain Peake tells me that he spent six months in surveying it. As I have already mentioned, it is forty square miles, so he must have had an awful experience. To begin with, work in the dense West African bush is an appalling undertaking at the best of times, but the forest being ju-ju, no local guide would accompany him or give him assistance of any kind. Mercifully his thirty carriers were not under the influence of this particular superstition, as they were men from the Northern Territories, but apart from them he had not a single soul to help him, and in order to make his survey he had to cut and clear his own way, yard by yard, unassisted. This is just another example of the difficulties and hardships of pioneer work. You remember what Kipling has to say about the men on survey duty

"There's a Legion that never was 'listed,  
That carries no colours or crest,  
But, split in a thousand detachments,  
Is breaking the road for the rest"

R M S "ABA,"  
OFF THE GOLD COAST

*June 21*

I am back once more on board the "Aba." I have seen and experienced so much during these past weeks that I can scarcely realize that only two short months have elapsed since the morning when, with the aid of "mammy-chair" and surf-boat, I landed on the Gold Coast



It is rather absurd that I should be sitting here in my pretty and familiar cabin writing to you when we are carrying the homeward mail. But my daily letters to you have become such a habit that I feel I should be doing my tour an injustice if I did not write down the events of my last hours on the Coast while their impression is still so vividly in my mind.

Let me go back to the end of our last day at Accra. The rain continued all day, and we were in despair. How about the State Ball? All Decima's lovely plans for transforming the courtyard and bastions into the most perfect "sitting-out" places had to be abandoned, and we had terrible fears as to whether anyone would be able to get through the floods to us at all. However, the "Sky God" was kind, and towards seven o'clock the rain ceased, too late, of course, to think about illuminations, but in time to save our guests from being drowned on their way to the party.

The evening began with an official dinner at which all the Members of the Legislative Council and heads of Departments were present. After the King's health had been drunk, the Governor proposed my health, and in a very kind speech bade me farewell in the name of the Gold Coast.

He reviewed our tour in a most amusing as well as interesting manner, and pointed out that we had really accomplished a remarkable journey. We had travelled two thousand five hundred miles, of which only three hundred and sixty were by rail, all the rest being done by motor. Not so very long ago this trek would have taken at least six months—we did it in seven weeks.

It was really a beautiful ball, and I was glad to have the opportunity of seeing all the friends I have met during my stay at Accra, and of thanking them for the unfailing kindness they have shown to me, in helping to make my visit one of such real enjoyment.

The next morning it was fine, though cloudy and rather stormy. What would the surf be like? This was the question that agitated most of the party at breakfast. The "Aba" came in about ten o'clock, and at 10.30 we left the Castle. The Governor drove me down to the beach, and I was quite overwhelmed to find so many friends assembled to see me off.

At length the last farewells were over and I stepped into the surf-boat. It was a very perilous proceeding, as the narrow plank I had to walk along to reach it was well under water, with the waves dashing over it. Decima, Alice and Annie followed, and we were just pushing off when, much to my surprise, Captain Puckridge jumped in.

It had been arranged for him to come off separately with all our loads, and not till we were safe on board did he tell me the reason for this sudden decision on his part. While I was busy saying good-bye he saw no fewer than seven boats upset, and considering it positively dangerous for us four women to face the terrific surf alone, he had instantly decided to abandon the loads to their fate and come with us.

I am not going to attempt to describe what that surf or that passage to the "Aba" was like. But I have the doubtful consolation of knowing that it was the worst surf during the last twenty years. Thus, at the very moment of my departure, I have gone through another typical "Coast" experience.

Captain Johnston Hughes received me with obvious pleasure when I scrambled out of the mammy-chair on to the ~~deck~~. It was delightful to have such a warm welcome. Even my stewardess (Miss Perry) and my stewards met me with beaming faces.

If only this voyage did not entail leaving the Coast there would be nothing to cloud my happiness, for shall I not be with you again in a fortnight?

We lay off Accra till night. There were heavy and

## LETTERS FROM, THE GOLD COAST 233

sudden rainstorms during the day, but the evening was fine, and we sat on deck and looked towards the twinkling lights of Christianborg and talked and talked of these wonderful past weeks

We got into Sekondi early this morning, when Captain Puckridge took leave of us, and transferred the arduous duty of looking after me to Captain Peake

Captain Puckridge has been simply splendid throughout this tour. It has been an enormous help to me to have some one so capable and so thoughtful attached to me. He took every worry and care off my shoulders, and, as I said in my first letter from the ship, I could not have wanted two more charming and delightful companions than him and dear Alice

It is still raining. It began last night and has continued all day without ceasing. I never even saw Sekondi, for although we lay off the town for six hours, it was completely blotted out by the rain. Just as a matter of curiosity, I am copying out the last day's rainfall at Accra since our arrival from Cape Coast

9 a m	13th June	9 a m	14th	4 86 inches
"	18th	" -	" 19th .	4 12 "
"	19th	" -	" 20th .	2 73 "
Week	9 a m	14th-9 a m	20th	16 5 "
	1st-19th June			21 53 "

Even now, though each throb of the engines, each swish of the waves against the side of the ship, tells me that I am on my homeward way, I cannot realize I have actually left West Africa

It is a marvellous country. What is its spell? I cannot tell you, nor wherein lies its strange and unfathomable charm. It lays its hand upon you, and, having once felt its compelling touch, you never can forget it or be wholly free from it

234    LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST

In spite of the heat and rain, in spite of loneliness and hardships, I might say in spite of every discomfort and drawback (and the Coast offers you many), you love it

## INDEX

Figures in *italics* refer to positions of plates

- "Aba," R M S , 1, 230  
 Abiben (the Rogue), 128  
 Abontiakoon, 200  
 Abosso, 200  
 Abosum of the Benya Su, 209  
 Aburi, 36, 222  
 Achumota, 17 *et seq*  
 Accra, 10, 11, 16, 209, 219, 226  
 Adams, Mr and Mrs , 205, 206  
 Adventurers of London, Company of, 8  
 African Society of London, 105  
 "Aggrey Beads," 47  
 Aguna, 184  
 Akoto, Amma Sewa, 48  
 Akraši, 176  
 Albert, Monsieur, 82, 86, 89  
 Anamabo, 219, 224  
 Ananse Kokroko, 197  
 Ananse, the Spider, 130, 146  
 Anglo-Dutch War (1781), 210  
 Annimaboe, 2  
 Anotchi, the Priest, 176  
 Ants, White, 13, 146  
 Armitage, Captain, 184  
 Ashanti, 140, 143  
 Ashanti Goldfields Corporation, 193  
 Ashanti War, 218  
 Attabubu, 187  
 Atterbury, Mr , 29, 211  
 Badua, 125  
 Bailly, M and Mme , 74, 87, 89, 90  
 Ball at Kumasi, 192  
 Bamboi, 84, 134, 138, 139, 140, 140, 150  
 Banda Nkwanta, 134, 134, 139, 140  
 Barbetu, 123, 124, 136  
 Basel Mission, 184  
 Bassana Grunshi, 107  
*Bastion de France*, 209  
 Bawku, 39, 66  
 Bazerberimis, 124  
 Beal, Mr , 64  
 Bekwai, 193, 227  
 Beliefs, 115  
 Benedictine Monks, 179  
 Bilcritt, Captain, 229  
 "Blonde," H M S , 218  
 "Bois de Boulogne," 90  
 Bole, 61, 79, 124, 125, 127 134, 143  
 Bosomtwe, 173, 174  
 Bosomtwe, Queen-Mother of, 175  
 Bowdich, Edward, 103, 167  
 Boy Scouts, 34  
 Brong tribe, 153  
 Bynfo, 100, 104, 111  
 Burner, Captain, 196  
 Bush-Kit, 75  
 Butter, Shea, 105  
 Butterflies, 161  
 Cabo Corso, 215

## 236 LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST

- Cadbury Hall, 35  
 Cape Coast, 2, 209 *et seq*, 214, 224  
 Cape Verde, 34  
 Caroline Matilda, Queen of Denmark, 16  
 Carthaginians, 2  
 Castellaine, Mr, 75  
 Catherine of Braganza, 8  
 Chakosis, 56  
 Charles II, 8  
 Christian VII, 16  
 Christianborg, 2, 10, 233  
 Christianborg Castle, 16  
 Church of England Mission Schools, Cape Coast, 213  
 Cintra, Pedro da, 7  
 Cocoa plantations, 36  
 Coker, Chief, 212, 217  
 Colbeck, Mr 63  
 Compound at Jirapa, 110, 118  
 Compound at Wa, 121  
 Conraadsburg, 210  
 Connaught, T R H the Duke and Duchess of, 222  
 Convent of the White Sister, Ougadougou, 74, 91  
 Convent of the White Sisters, Cape Coast, 212  
 Cookson, Captain, 223  
 Crocodiles, 98  
 Customs, 115  
 Daboya 125  
 Daboyas, the, 72  
 Dagatus, ~~221~~ 225  
 Dagomba, 56  
 Dagombas, the, 79, 124  
 Dances, Harvest, 84, 127  
 Danes, 219  
 "Dash," 11, 44, 68, 90, 108, 122, 175, 194  
 d'Azambuya, Don Diego, 209  
 de Lattre, Père, 76  
 Denkyira, King of, 176  
 de Ruyter, Admiral 219  
 d'Escobar, Pedro, 2  
 Disabled Soldiers' Industry, 22  
 Dixcove, 2  
 Doherty, Captain, 11, 31, 117  
 Dominic, Father, 213  
 Doole, Captain, 31, 140  
 Drake, Sir Francis, 8  
 Drinking Fountain, 224  
 Drums, 110  
 Drums, Talking, 41, 42  
 Dunstan, Mr, 202  
 Dutch, 219  
 Eduadin, 193  
 Effua Dopa (Boahun), 153  
 Egypt, 125  
 Ejura, 150, 164, 168  
 Elizabethville, 14  
 Elmina, 2, 194, 200, 209  
 Elmina Castle, 211  
 European Hospital, Kumasi, 183  
 European Hospital, Tamale, 44, 63  
 Eyre-Smith, Captain St J, M C, 99, 100, 100, 106, 126  
 Fanti Women, 224  
 Fashions at Lawra, 109  
 Ferguson, Mr, 124  
 Fieldgate, Mr and Mrs, 212, 213, 214  
 Finlay, Mr and Mrs, 223  
 Folk-lore, 129  
 Fra-Fras, 66, 99  
 Fra-Fra Memorial, 60, 69  
 Francis, Father, 180  
 Fraser, Mr A S, 20  
 Fraser, Dr, 195  
 Freetown, 4, 7  
 French War Memorial, Ougadougou, 80, 92

- Fu-fu, 164  
 Fulanis, 62  
 Fuller Falls, 150  
 Fuller, Sir Francis, 151  
 Furley, Miss, 24  
 Fusu Kwebi, 227  
  
 Ga, 130, 132  
 Gambaga, 61, 66  
 Gold Mines, 193, 200  
 Goldsmiths, 227  
 Greeks, Ancient, 2  
 Grunshis, 121, 124, 152  
 Guggisberg, Sir Gordon and  
     Lady, 10, 20, 6 *et seq.*  
 Gura of Yendi, 122  
  
 Halder, Malam, 44  
 Hall, Mr Brace, 133, 134  
 Hammock, West African, 180,  
     193  
 Hanno, 7  
 "Harmattan," 65  
 Harper, Mr C N, C M G, 178  
 Hausas, 107  
 "Hausa Farewell," 117  
 Hawkins, Sn John, 2, 8  
 Hedges, Mr W F, 23  
 Hemans, Commander, 31  
 Henderson, Lieutenant, 124  
 Henry, Prince, the Navigator, 7  
 Hesling, M Albert and family,  
     70, 81, 84, 87, 89, 93  
 Hippopotami, 111  
 Hobbs, Mr, 161  
 Hodgson, Sir Frederick, 183  
 Holmes, Mrs, 201  
 Hughes, Captam Johnson, 1, 232  
 Huni Valley, 191  
 Hunter, Mr, 190  
  
 Infants' Hospital, Accra, 225  
 Insuta, 184, 202  
 Irvine, Captam, 124  
  
 Jackson, D S O, Major, 223  
 James, Duke of York, 8  
 Jessie, 32  
 Jirapa, 110, 114, 117, 118  
 John II, King, 7  
 Jones, Mr (A P C Sekondi),  
     208  
 Jones, Mr O K, 161, 182,  
     209  
 Juabin, 184  
 Jubilee Medal, 106  
 Judd, Mr, 163  
 Ju-ju Forest, 196, 230  
 "Ju-ju" men, 84, 92, 120, 128  
  
 Kanjaga country, 99  
 Karaga, 57  
 Kasana, 124  
 King George, H M, 126  
 King's Birthday Celebrations,  
     Accra, 226  
 Kintampo, 142, 145, 151  
 Kipling, R, 230  
 Koforidua, 222  
 Konkombas, 56  
 Kumasi, 20, 30 *et seq.*, 150, 171,  
     173  
 Kumasi Day, 189  
 Kumasi Fort, 183  
 Kumasi, St Cyprian's Church,  
     179  
 Kumasi Siege of, 184  
 Kweku Tsini, 198  
  
 Ladies' Shooting Club, Sekondi,  
     208  
 Lampty, Mr, 155  
 Land Tenure, 208  
 Las Palmas, 3  
 Lawra, 61, 90, 94, 99, 100, 125,  
     126  
 Le Fanu, Dr, 29, 195  
 Legends, 72, 114, 116, 128, 146,  
     197

## 238 LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST

- Leggett, Captain, 184  
 Le Roy, Capitaine, 87, 89  
 Leverhulme, Lord, 208  
 Lions, 104  
 Lobis, 102, 108, 121, 125  
 Lome, 59  
 Lorha, *see* Lawra  
 Lynch, Captain, 163  
  
 Macdonell, Colonel, 37 188  
 Malam, my "boy," 32  
 Mallam, Chief, 122  
 Malwe, 135  
 "Mammy-Chair," 11, 230  
 Mampon, 170, 172, 184, 222  
 Mampon, Queen-Mother of, 45, 187  
 Mampon District, 36, 45  
 Mamprussi, 66, 79  
 Mansfield, Captain E T, 58  
 Marie Louise Hospital for Mothers and Infants, Accra, 226  
 Marriage customs, 79  
 Martin, Father, 180, 209  
 Martinson, Father, 227  
 Massie, Major, 60  
 Maurice of Nassau, Prince, 210  
 Maxwell, Mr John, 20, 34, 172, 176 178, 189, 192, 224  
 Michel, Monsieur and Mme 70, 81, 87, 89  
 Mills, Mrs Hutton, 47  
 Mines, 193, 200  
 Miong, Chief of, 57  
 Mohammedan Community, 121  
 Montgomery, Dr, 187  
 Morin, Father, 76  
 Morocco, 125  
 Morris, Major, 158  
 Mos, 152  
 Moshis, 72, 79  
 Motor breakdown, 135  
 Music, native, 110  
  
 Na Yakuba, Genealogical Tree, 56-7  
 Na of Yendi 56  
 Nanweni, Chief of Lawra, 126  
 Nasia District, 65  
 Nasia Swamp, 50  
 Navarongo, 54, 61, 64, 99  
 Nkawe, 176  
 Nkoranza, 150, 153, 160, 178  
 Nkoranza, Queen-Mother of, 153  
 Nkoranza, Silver Stool of, 159  
 Nkoranzis, 152  
 Nkwanta, 154, 156, 184  
 Nobili, 70, 80  
 Norris, Captain, 45, 182  
 Northern Territories, 53  
 Northern Territories Constabulary, 24, 60  
 Northern Territories, size of, 142  
 Northern Territories taken over, 124  
 Nsuta, 184  
 Ntikuma, 197  
 Ntum Gyakari, 176  
  
 O'Brien, Dr, 24  
 Obuas, 180, 193  
 Omanhene, 153  
 Osai Bonsu of Mampon, 50  
 Osai Tutu, 176  
 Ougadougou, 74, 75, 80, 84, 92  
  
 Palavers, 40, 56, 66, 100, 101, 104, 106, 120, 133, 153, 154, 160, 160, 165, 170, 211  
 Palbe, 53  
 Parmeter, Captain, 154, 155  
 Park, Mungo, 104, 105  
 Part, Dr, 124  
 Patterson, Mr and Mrs, 222  
 Peake, M C, R E, Captain E R L., 229, 233



- Pepys, 8  
 Peripo III, 123  
 Perry, Miss, 232  
 Phœnicians, 2  
 Picknett, Annie, 2, 39, 173  
 Polygamy, 78  
 Portuguese, 210  
 Pouvereau, Monsieur, 70, 82  
 Prah River, 180, 184, 196, 230  
 Prahsu, 218  
 Prang, 84, 144  
 Prayers, Native, 190  
 Prempeh, 34, 177  
 Prince of Wales, H R H, 6, 44  
 Prince Christian Victor, H H  
     the late, 5, 33, 63, 190, 212,  
     215, 217, 229  
 Prince Henry of Battenberg,  
     H R H the late, 218  
 Princess Beatrice, H R H, 218  
 Princess Mary, H R H, Vis-  
     countess Lascelles, 46, 47  
 Princess Christian Hospital, 5  
 Proverb, Ashanti, 134  
 Puckridge, Captain, 2 *et seq*, 130  
  
 Queen Mary, H M, 225  
 Queen Victoria H M the late,  
     212  
 Queen-Mother of Bosomtwe, 175  
 Queen-Mother of Mampon 45,  
     187  
 Queen-Mother of Nkoranza, 153  
  
 Race meeting at Lawra, 110  
 Race meeting at Bole, 127  
 Railway Workshops, 207  
 Rainfall Accra, 233  
 Ramsay, the Lady Patricia, 222  
 Rattray, Captain R S, 41, 166,  
     172, 197, 228  
 Rhodesia, 129  
 Riding, 40, 89  
 Rifle Range, Accra, 224  
  
 Roads in Northern Territories,  
     cost of, 84  
 Robinson, Dr Norah, 226  
 Roger, Lady, 224  
 Roman Catholic Mission, Nava-  
     rongo, 181  
 Rowe, D S O, M C, R A, Lt -  
     Col, 229  
  
 Sacred Lake of Ashantis, 173, 174  
 Saddles, decorated, 108  
 Safulugu (Savelugu), 56  
 Salaga, 53  
 Saltpond, 220  
 Samon, 123, 136  
 Santerem, Juan de, 2  
 Saralugu, 57  
 Saxton, Commander, 222  
 Scott, Sir Francis, 38, 212  
 Scottish Mission, 181  
 Scottish Mission, Accra, 227  
 Sekondi (Seccondée), 3, 190, 200,  
     233  
 Sekondi, St Andrew's Church,  
     208  
 Sekredumasi, 155  
 Seriki of the Zongo, the, 34, 44  
 Shaftesbury, Lord, 9  
 Shea butter, 105  
 Sierra Leone 5  
 Sierra Leone, Bishop of, 5  
 Sierra Leone Company, 9  
 Sisal Plantation, 26  
 Sisili River, 66, 99  
 Slater, Sir Ransford and Lady, 5  
 Slave Trade, 9  
 Songs, Native, 132  
 State Ball, 231  
 Stool Golden, of Ashanti, 46, 176  
 Stool of Gold, Miniature, 165  
 Stool of Juaben, 176  
 Stool of Yendi, 57  
 Stool, Silver, for H R H Princess  
     Mary, 49

## 240 LETTERS FROM THE GOLD COAST

- Stewart, Sir Donald, 125  
 Stuart Alice Harrington, 1  
 Sunyani, 153, 154, 164  
 "Sunyani," the parrot, 167  
 Survey, 229  
 Swallows, 103  
 Swanzy James, 164  
 Swedes 219  
 Swedru, 220  
  
 Takoradi, 204  
 Tamale 30 34, 38, 53, 63, 141  
 Tandaga Na, 122  
 Tarkwa, 195  
 Tekiman, 160, 168  
 Tekiman, Omanhene of, 168  
 Thomas, Mr J H, 229  
 Thompson, Mr, 201  
 Tindanas, 122  
 Togoland, 56  
 Tong Hills 67  
 "Toothless Tom," 40  
 Trade of Gold Coast, 192  
 Tsetse fly 61, 150  
 Tumu, 90, 96, 99, 124 125, 126,  
     228  
  
 Ulrick Mr 201  
  
 Victoria Park Cape Coast, 212  
 Volta La Haute, 79, *et seq*  
 Volta, River, 52, 67, 104, 140,  
     143, 144 150  
  
 Wa, 61 79, 117, 120, 124, 124,  
     132  
 Wa, Na of, 126  
 W A F F, 142  
 Wales 121 125  
 Walker-Leigh, Major and Mrs,  
     53 70, 141, 203  
  
 Walwale, 66  
 Wani Omanhene, 165  
 Ward, Miss 5  
 Watts, Captain, and Mrs  
     Stewart, 220  
 Wenchu, 150, 160  
 Wenchu Omanhene of, 180  
 "Wenchu, the parrot, 163  
 Wesleyan Mission 181  
 West African Nursing Service, 24  
 White Fathers' Mission, Ouga-  
     dougou, 91  
 White Fathers' Monastery, 75  
 Whitfield, Commander, 31, 73  
 Whithall, Colonel 119, 123  
 Wilberforce, William, 9  
 Wilkie, Mrs, 227  
 Wilkinson, Mr (Attorney-  
     General), 223  
 Wilkinson, Captain and Mrs,  
     145, 150 169  
 Wilcocks, General Sir James,  
     G C B, 187  
 William, Prince of Orange 210  
 Williams, Major and Mrs, 4, 59  
 Wolseley, Lord, 218  
 Wono, 180  
 Wood, Sir Evelyn, 218  
 Worthington, Mr Frank, 129  
  
 Yakuba Na, Genealogical Tree,  
     56-7  
 Yao Kramo, 168  
 Yeji, 46, 52  
 Yendi, 56  
 Yendi, Gura of, 122  
 Yendi Kings of, 56  
 Yendi, Stool of, 57  
  
 Zuaragu, 54, 60, 61, 64, 68

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